

Wichita State University

Graduate School

Guidelines for the Development of Graduate Certificates

DEFINITION: Graduate certificates are awarded by departments, colleges, and the Graduate School to recognize graduate-level accomplishment in a cluster of related graduate courses. They serve as the student's record of coherent academic accomplishment. They are not degrees, concentrations, minors, or certification programs. Some certificates are “free-standing” for students who desire focused graduate level education, but who may not wish to pursue a graduate degree. Alternatively, certificates can be pursued by degree bound students to highlight a particular emphasis area or as “modular” components of the degree program.

COURSE WORK: Graduate certificate programs typically consist of 4 to 6 graduate courses (12 to 18 credit hours). Significant departures from this range will require justification in the proposal. No more than 1/3 of the required course work should be S/U graded. Graduate badges are exempt from this limit because *Bg* grades are associated with a higher quality of work equivalent to a letter grade of a *B*. Transfer hours are usually not acceptable for certificate programs.

MANAGEMENT: A certificate program may be housed in a single department or span multiple academic units. In either case, the certificate program is proposed and managed by a steering committee of faculty having an interest in the certificate program. Normally one faculty member serves as certificate program coordinator and convener for the steering committee. Note that certificate steering committees can perfectly overlap the steering committee for other certificate programs.

ELIGIBILITY: Students seeking graduate certificates must be admitted to the Graduate School in a degree program or in non-degree A status. All Graduate School policies relative to admissions apply. Eligibility criteria particular to the proposed certificate program (course or degree prerequisites, TOEFL scores, language or tool requirements, etc.) should be defined in the certificate program proposal.

International students will not be issued an I-20 for certificate programs alone. They may obtain a certificate only while concurrently pursuing a graduate degree.

Students pursuing a graduate certificate must notify the program area (in a written memo) that they wish to complete the certificate before completing the required courses via the submitted Plan of Study. Requests to complete the certificate are reviewed by the program faculty and the Dean of the Graduate School.

DEGREE OVERLAP: Students may usually use certificate course work toward an eventual degree. Exceptions should be noted in the certificate program proposal.

COMPLETION REQUIREMENTS: A cumulative graduate grade point average of at least 3.00 for all courses comprising the certificate program and no grades below *C*. Badges that were not

earned (*NB*) cannot be used on the Plan of Study. Each certificate program should offer a sequence of courses that allows completion of the program requirements in a defined amount of time.

COMPLETION PROCESS: Notify the program area in writing of intent to complete the certificate. Do the following in the semester the certificate requirements are met:

- Prepare (with graduate advisor) and submit (to the Graduate School) a Plan of Study (for the certificate)
- Submit an Application for Degree (for the certificate) with a \$15.00 filing fee to the Graduate School no later than 20th day of fall or spring semester or the 10th day of a summer term

APPROVAL PROCESS: Curriculum Change Forms for new certificate programs should go through the standard formal review process, including the Graduate Council, and should include all components listed below. Normally one semester should be allowed for the approval process.

- Title of the proposed certificate program
- Certificate program objectives
- Demonstration of need
- Detailed description and rationale for the curriculum, including a summary of how the certificate fits in the unit's larger objectives
- Plan for offering a sequence of courses that allows completion of the program requirements in a defined amount of time
- Program organization, including identification of:
 - Faculty associated with the certificate program, normally those who expect to teach courses in the certificate program curriculum
 - A steering committee of graduate faculty identified with the certificate program representing a subset of #1
 - A committee chair or coordinator responsible for management of the certificate program, for advising students, etc.
- Statements of support from chairs and deans whose programs and faculty are involved in the proposed certificate program. Statements from representatives of any program, department, or college on which the proposed certificate program will have an impact.
- Assessment plan that describes how program quality of the program will be monitored. The plan should also include narrative on how continuation and duration of the program will be determined.

GAINFUL EMPLOYMENT GUIDELINES: After the proposal is approved by the dean of the Graduate School, the Offices of Academic Affairs and Financial Aid will determine whether the proposed program is a gainful employment program, as defined by U.S. Department of Education Program Integrity regulations (i.e., a program that is at least one year in length, leads to a certificate or other non-degree recognized credential, and prepares student for gainful employment in a recognized occupation). A certificate program that is eligible for federal financial aid and is determined to be a gainful employment program must comply with disclosure and reporting requirements. Federal regulations require a university to disclose, inter alia, the following information about the program on the university's website and in materials promoting the certificate program:

- Tuition and fees
- Costs of books, supplies, room and board
- On-time graduation rate for students completing the program

- Job placement rates
- The median loan debt incurred by students who completed the program
- Curriculum routing sheet with the appropriate departmental, college and university signatures

CRITERIA FOR APPROVAL: The principles for assessing the academic quality of proposals are listed below. Deans, chairs, and other administrators will address resource issues in their statement of support.

- Demonstrated need
- Course work should offer clear educational objectives at the graduate level
- Course work comprising the certificate program must be an integrated and organized sequence of study

RECOGNITION: Students completing the certificate program will receive an appropriately worded certificate, provided by the Registrar. A notation will be made on the student's transcript when the certificate has been awarded.

PROMOTION: Approved graduate certificate programs will be listed in the *Graduate Catalog* and advertised appropriately.

QUALITY AND ASSESSMENT: All WSU courses for graduate credit are taught by graduate faculty who have been reviewed for currency in their subject matter, scholarship or creative work, and teaching experience appropriate to teaching in specific graduate certificate programs. Certificate programs are initially approved through the process defined. Certificate programs are normally approved for three years, after which they will be reviewed and recommended for continuation or discontinuation.

Approved:	Graduate Council, January 28, 1998
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