

Policies and Procedures for Undergraduate Certificate Programs (Faculty Senate Resolution #09-52, December 2009)

A. Introduction

Undergraduate certificate programs may be created within the structure of undergraduate academic units. Students may be awarded undergraduate certificates upon completion of a well-defined program of course work. The undergraduate certificate is not defined as a degree, rather, it is a focused collection of courses that, when completed, affords the student some record of coherent academic accomplishment in a given discipline or set of related disciplines. However, the undergraduate certificate is not viewed as a guaranteed means of entry into a degree program. While the courses comprising an undergraduate certificate may be used as evidence in support of a student's application for admission to a degree program, the certificate itself is not considered to be a prerequisite. The didactic material encompassed within a certificate program may represent a more practice-oriented subset of an existing undergraduate discipline. The title of any undergraduate certificate program should contain the words certificate or certification.

B. Process of Approval for New Undergraduate Certificate Programs

Proposals for new undergraduate certificate programs are created and submitted by constituent faculty for review by the University Curriculum Committee (UCC). Each proposal must include a signed endorsement by all of the department chairperson(s), dean(s) of the college or professional school(s), and the appropriate vice chancellor(s) contributing to the organization and administration of the certificate. In the case of interdisciplinary certificate programs, the administrator ultimately responsible must be identified. New undergraduate certificate programs offered in collaboration with other universities must also be endorsed by the collaborating department(s) at the other institutions and must meet the requirements for prior authorization from the UNC General Administration (UNC-GA). The UCC considers the merit of all undergraduate certificate proposals. After approval by the UCC, certificate proposals must be forwarded for approval by the Educational Policies and Planning Committee (EPPC), the Faculty Senate, the Academic Council, and the chancellor for approval. The Office of the Chancellor will make notification of approved certificates to the UNC-GA.

C. Criteria for Approval of Certificate Programs

Criteria for approval of new undergraduate certificate programs include the following:

1. The proposed sequence of course work must meet a clear and appropriate educational objective at the baccalaureate level.

2. The proposed program must achieve its educational objective in a well designed, cohesive, and timely manner.
3. A demonstrated need for the certificate must exist.
4. An appropriate number of credit hours must comprise the certificate program. The number of undergraduate credits may not be less than 12 semester hours or more than one-half of the semester hours necessary for a related undergraduate degree.

D. Policies Governing Certificate Admission Criteria and Subsequent Admission to Undergraduate Degree Programs

The certificate admissions criteria and policies governing the relation of certificates to undergraduate degree programs include the following:

1. Admission to ECU and enrollment in an academic program are required.
2. Each certificate program sets the minimum admissions requirements for the certificate (e.g., grade point average, minimum TOEFL scores, standardized test scores, work experience, etc.). However, all certificate candidates must be informed at the time of their acceptance that admission to and completion of a certificate program does not supersede the admission requirements to a degree program should they subsequently apply to an undergraduate degree program.
3. Each undergraduate program must decide which, if any, certificate courses can be counted toward the undergraduate degree. The certificate student must be informed at the time of admission into the certificate program how many semester hours can be applied toward an undergraduate degree.
4. Undergraduate students currently enrolled in an undergraduate degree program may simultaneously pursue an undergraduate certificate, if approved by their academic advisor or undergraduate program director and the certificate program director.
5. The certificate program director will note successful completion of a certificate program to the registrar to ensure notification on the student's transcript. The certificate will be awarded to a baccalaureate student upon completion of the degree program or to a post-baccalaureate student upon completion of the certificate hours.

6. Students pursuing an undergraduate certificate will be required to meet the academic retention requirements approved by the certificate program.

An undergraduate certificate student may enroll on either a part-time or a full-time basis, as determined by the certificate program director.

The rationale for requiring formal enrollment in undergraduate certificate programs is based on the need for proper allocation of instructional resources and the desire to afford the certificate students access to the desired undergraduate courses.

E. Certificate Program Review

All undergraduate certificate programs will be reviewed within the course of regular undergraduate program assessment and review.

F. Application Procedure for a New Certificate Program

For consideration, all proposals will be reviewed by the UCC. Proposals for new undergraduate certificate programs must contain the following information:

1. A statement of the educational objectives of the program.
2. A statement of the admission standards for the certificate program and a statement of the academic retention standards for the successful completion of the program.
3. A statement of the proposed course sequence associated with the certificate, including titles and course descriptions for both existing courses and any new courses that may be developed.
4. A statement explaining the relationship of the certificate program with other programs offered at East Carolina University (ECU). If applicable, the statement should also describe how the certificate may affect other departments or units. Supporting documentation of consultations with affected units is required and should be attached to the proposal.
5. The catalog copy for the certificate program.
6. A statement of how the proposed course sequences associated with the certificate will meet the stated educational objectives.

7. A statement explaining how the certificate program will be delivered (on-campus (face to face), distance course (face to face off campus), and/or online (50% or more of the instruction is offered online)).
8. A statement of the need for the proposed program and the basis for such a need supported by either externally or internally derived data.
9. The names of the faculty associated with or contributing to the certificate program, either by teaching one or more of the courses associated with the program or participating in the design of the course sequence. Adjunct faculty associated with the program should also include up-to-date curriculum vitae.
10. The name and curriculum vita of the faculty member who will be designated as the director of the program for purposes of communication with the university community.
11. A description of the proposed certificate's impact on campus resources.
12. A statement specifying the professional license, if any, for which the certificate qualifies.
13. The Classification of Instructional Program (CIP) title and six-digit code (descriptions available at: <http://www.ecu.edu/cs-acad/acadprograms/PoliciesForms.cfm>).
14. A statement specifying the minimum number of weeks required for a student to complete the certificate. Fall and spring semesters count as 15 weeks each and a regular summer term counts as 5 weeks. Prerequisites should be considered in determining this number.

G. Process for Revision or Discontinuation of an Existing Certificate Program

Requests to revise an existing certificate program should be submitted to the UCC. Submission packages include a memorandum of request explaining why and how the existing certificate is to be revised, marked catalog copy, supporting documentation if certificate revisions affect other units within the university, and a completed signature form.

Requests to discontinue an existing certificate program are not reviewed by the UCC. For more information about the discontinuation process, access the Office of Academic Program Web site at <http://www.ecu.edu/cs-acad/acadprograms/PoliciesForms.cfm>.