Policies and Procedures for New Graduate Certificate Programs

This document is under review, and a new version will be forwarded for campus approval in fall 2017. For now, please be familiar with general policies and procedures for new graduate certificate programs, and use the New Certificate Form in Curriculog.

A. Introduction

Students may be awarded graduate certificates upon completion of a well-defined program of coursework. The graduate certificate is not defined as a degree by the Graduate School, 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 graduate certificate is not viewed as a guaranteed means of entry into a graduate degree program. While the courses comprising a graduate certificate may be used as evidence in support of a student's application for admission to a graduate degree program, the certificate itself is not considered to be a prerequisite. The didactic material encompassed within a graduate certificate program may represent a more practice-oriented subset of an existing graduate discipline. The title of any graduate certificate program may or may not contain the word certificate, depending on the tradition in the discipline proposing the program.

B. Process of Approval for New Graduate Certificate Programs

Proposals for new graduate certificate programs are created and submitted by constituent graduate faculty for review by the Graduate Curriculum Committee (GCC) and approval by the Graduate Council. Each proposal must include a signed endorsement by all of the department chairperson(s) and dean(s) of the college or professional school(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 graduate 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 of the UNC General Administration (UNC GA). The Graduate Council considers the merit of all graduate certificate proposals, and makes recommendations for approval/disapproval of graduate action items to the chancellor. Once approved by the Graduate Council, the certificate proposal is submitted to the Educational Policies and Planning Committee (EPPC), which makes recommendations to the Faculty Senate. The Faculty Senate provides formal faculty advice to the chancellor. The Academic Council reviews Graduate Council actions and Faculty Senate resolutions and makes recommendations for approval/disapproval to the chancellor. The Office of the Chancellor will authorize notification of approved certificates to the UNC GA and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC).

C. Criteria for Approval of Certificate Programs

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

1. A demonstrated need for the certificate must exist.

2. The proposed coursework must meet a clear and appropriate educational objective at the graduate level.
3. The proposed program must achieve its educational objective(s) [learning outcome(s)] in a well-designed, cohesive, and timely manner.

4. An appropriate number of credit hours must comprise the certificate program. The number of graduate credits may not be less than nine semester hours or more than one-half of the semester hours necessary for a related graduate degree.

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

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

1. An earned baccalaureate degree, or its equivalent from a regionally accredited college or university, is 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). 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 a graduate degree program.

3. Credit earned while enrolled in a graduate certificate program may be transferred into a degree program with the approval of the department offering the degree program.

4. Graduate students currently enrolled in a graduate degree program may simultaneously pursue a graduate certificate if approved by their graduate program director and the certificate program director. The electronic Request to Add a Certificate form must be submitted by the student to obtain proper permissions for pursuit of the certificate. This form is electronically routed to the graduate program director, the certificate program director, and the Graduate School for permissions before being sent to the Office of the Registrar to become part of the student’s academic record.

5. Certificate-seeking graduate students who are not currently enrolled in a master's program must apply and be admitted as certificate seeking students into a separate classification within the Graduate School, as "Certificate Graduate" students. This separate classification will permit keeping of university-wide statistical and enrollment data for certificate programs, and will allow inclusion of such efforts in the annual reports and academic planning. Successful completion of a certificate program will be noted on the student's transcript and a certificate will be issued by the Office of the Registrar.

6. With the support of the graduate program director, up to one-third of the credit hours in a graduate certificate may be transferred from a regionally accredited college or university, but in all cases, students must earn at least one-half of the credit hours in a graduate certificate at East Carolina University. Programs may set lower transfer hour limits. (Graduate Council, December 8, 2014)
7. Students pursuing a graduate certificate will be required to meet the academic retention requirements approved by the Graduate Council for the certificate program.

A certificate graduate student may enroll on either a part-time or a full-time basis, as determined by the certificate program coordinator. Certificate graduate students enrolled as non-degree students will not be eligible for graduate assistantships. Some but not all certificate programs are approved for financial aid. The list of approved certificates is maintained by the Office of Student Financial Aid.

The rationale for requiring formal enrollment in graduate certificate programs is based on the need for proper allocation of instructional resources and the desire to afford the certificate students equal access to the desired graduate courses. Departments and programs are better able to plan offerings of the appropriate graduate courses if they are aware of the upcoming demand for such courses. This demand can best be gauged by knowledge of the number of students in the program. By registering as graduate students, the certificate-seeking students will have timely access to graduate courses offered by departments and schools.

E. Certificate Program Review

All graduate certificate programs will be reviewed within the course of regular graduate program assessment and review, as defined by the Graduate Council.

F. Completion of the New Certificate Program Application Form

All new graduate certificate program proposal packages must include the completed certificate program application form included below in addition to documents required by the unit, college/school curriculum committee, GCC, Graduate Council, EPPC, or other approving bodies.
New Graduate Certificate Program Application Form

Do not use this application form. Use the New Certificate Form in Curriculog.

For consideration by the Graduate School all proposals will be reviewed by the Graduate Curriculum Committee and approved by the Graduate Council. Proposals for new graduate certificate programs must contain the following information:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proposed certificate title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proposed 6-digit CIP code</td>
<td>Click here to enter text.</td>
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<tr>
<td>IPEDS Web site</td>
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<tr>
<td>Academic home of certificate:</td>
<td>Click here to enter text.</td>
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<tr>
<td>College/School or department</td>
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<tr>
<td>This academic home should represent where the certificate will be housed in the ECU Graduate Catalog and the ECU Academic Program Inventory. It also identifies the unit responsible for assessing the program. Some certificates are housed at the college level while others are housed in specific departments.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Required credit hours</td>
<td>Click here to enter text.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minimum number of weeks to complete certificate</td>
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<tr>
<td>(fall and spring = 16 weeks each; summer = 11 weeks) Include prerequisites in calculation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Expected delivery method (check all that apply)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Resident on-campus</td>
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<tr>
<td>Distance education (50% or more of instruction is offered online)</td>
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1. Consult with the GCC resource person regarding the intent to develop a new graduate certificate. GCC resource persons are identified on the GCC SharePoint site.

2. Consult with Karen Summey, East Carolina University (ECU) academic program development coordinator, regarding graduate certificate development.

3. State the need for the proposed program and the basis for such a need supported by either externally or internally derived data.

   Click here to enter text.

4. State the broad educational objectives of the program.

   Click here to enter text.

5. Consult with Alex Senior, assessment associate, for assistance with development of student learning outcomes for the program as they will be reported in TracDat. List the student learning outcomes here.

   Click here to enter text.
6. Is there a sequential order of courses for this certificate program? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, list courses in sequential order.

For existing courses, copy course description directly from the university’s graduate catalog. Format new course listings in like manner.

Click here to enter text.

7. Describe how the proposed coursework will meet the stated educational objectives.

Click here to enter text.

8. Describe the relationship of the certificate program with other related programs offered at ECU, including any existing “parent” degree(s) and respective CIP code(s) from which certificate courses are derived.

Click here to enter text.

9. 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.

Click here to enter text.

Obtain an affected units report from Diane Coltraine, Office of the Registrar. This report is generated using Acalog, the university’s catalog management system, identifies all published instances of affected units, and must be included in your package submission.

Affected degrees or academic programs:
Click here to enter text.
Click here to enter text.
Click here to enter text.
Click here to enter text.

There are some instances where affected units may include units not specifically identified in the affected units report, as the overlap or duplication is related to content, topic, field, discipline, or other aspect.

Identify if this certificate overlaps or duplicates content offered by affected unit(s) or program(s):
☐ Not applicable ☐ Notification and response from affected units is attached for all instances where there is potential for overlapping content or potential duplication of course content.

10. State the admissions and academic retention standards for successful completion of the certificate program. This should include whether the certificate will be a standalone, or whether it can be completed only by a student already admitted to an existing degree

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11. Estimate the number of certificates to be awarded in the first five years.

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<tr>
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<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Year 2</th>
<th>Year 3</th>
<th>Year 4</th>
<th>Year 5</th>
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12. Specify any professional licenses or examinations for which graduates of the certificate may qualify.

Click here to enter text.

13. State how the effectiveness of the certificate program will be evaluated. A quality enhancement plan addressing how the program will be further improved should then be developed.

Click here to enter text.

14. Describe the proposed certificate’s impact on campus resources.

Click here to enter text.

15. List the name, unit, rank, and department association of 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 coursework. These faculty members must be credentialed to teach the subject matter of the proposed certificate program.

Click here to enter text.

16. Provide the name and curriculum vita of the faculty member who will be designated as the coordinator of the program for purposes of communication with the Graduate School.

Click here to enter text.

17. It is a faculty responsibility to determine whether or not to seek Title IV financial aid eligibility for graduate certificate programs. Options include:

a. Students must be enrolled in a graduate degree program to seek the certificate. In this case, financial aid is awarded through the normal plan of study for the degree.

b. Students may enroll in the program as a certificate-seeking student only. In this case, ECU will apply to have the certificate included in the U.S. Department of Education’s Program Participation Agreement (PPA) with ECU for Title IV aid. If certificates are listed on the
PPA, and financial aid is offered, faculty will share responsibility for tracking graduation, gainful employment, and professional salary information of certificate students. This reporting is a federal condition for financial aid.

An example of the information that must be reported can be found by visiting the Graduate School Web site. Filter the program level by “certificate,” choose a program from the list, and then click the Gainful Employment Information button.

The department chair of the academic home of the certificate should initial here to signify understanding of this federal reporting requirement. Click here to enter text.

Given these reporting requirements, do you wish to pursue Title IV financial aid eligibility for this certificate program?  □ Yes  □ No

If yes, forward this certificate application form to Julie Poorman, director of student financial aid, after it has received approval from the chancellor.

18. Consult with Diane Coltraine, Office of the Registrar, to prepare marked catalog copy and submit as a separate Word document.

19. Consult with Karen Summey, ECU academic program development coordinator, to finalize the documents within the package before submission to the Graduate Curriculum Committee.