

POLICY FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF CERTIFICATE AND DIPLOMA PROGRAMS

University Policy No.: AC1135
Classification: Academic and Students
Approving Authority: Senate
Effective Date: December/07
Supersedes: May/00
Last Editorial Change:
Mandated Review:

PURPOSE

1. This policy guides the establishment of certificate and diploma programs at both the undergraduate and graduate level. The purpose of establishing these credentials is to advance the university's academic goals and objectives, and to address the growing demand across society and within professional and academic sectors for specialized, flexible, and accessible education within particular domains of study, and to complement existing undergraduate, masters and doctoral programming.

POLICY

2. Criteria for the Establishment of Certificate and Diploma Programs

- 2.1 An undergraduate or graduate certificate or diploma program must have a clearly defined educational objective and rationale, and comprise a coherent body of knowledge.
- 2.2 Programs should have a target audience, and meet a significant and sustained educational need.

3. Types of Undergraduate Certificates or Diplomas

- 3.1 Undergraduate Certificate
 - 3.1.1 A certificate program may consist of regular undergraduate university credit courses, some or all of which might be designed for the credential or specially developed non-credit courses at an equivalent level, or a combination thereof. All certificate program courses must be approved by the Curriculum Committee of the academic unit offering the credential.
 - 3.1.2 Undergraduate certificate programs of study should normally consist of 270-390 hours of classroom equivalent instruction (10.5 - 15 units when offered for credit).
 - 3.1.3 Credit courses completed in certificate programs may be applied toward undergraduate degree programs with approval of the appropriate academic units offering the degree program.

3.1.4 The minimum admission requirements will be secondary school graduation. Applicants who do not meet the normal admission requirements who are particularly qualified by appropriate experience may also be admissible.

3.2 Undergraduate Diploma

3.2.1 A diploma program should normally consist of regular undergraduate university credit courses, some or all of which might be designed for the credential or specially developed non-credit courses at an equivalent level or combination thereof. All certificate program courses must be approved by the Curriculum Committee of the academic unit offering the credential.

3.2.2 Undergraduate diploma programs of study should be equivalent to one full year or more of university study (normally 15-18 units) when offered for credit.

3.2.3 Undergraduate diploma credit courses are normally at the 300 and 400 level; non-credit courses normally are offered at the equivalent level.

3.2.4 Depending upon the nature and content of the diploma, admission may require either 3rd year standing, or an undergraduate degree from a recognized post-secondary institution, or a specified combination of academic and professional experience.

3.2.5 Students who wish to transfer from a certificate or diploma program to a regular undergraduate degree program must meet the current admission requirements of that program.

3.2.6 Credit courses completed in diploma programs may be applied toward undergraduate degree programs with approval of both the faculty and academic unit offering the degree program.

3.3 Professional Specialization Certificate

3.3.1 A Professional Specialization Certificate program may consist of regular undergraduate university credit courses some or all of which might be designed for the credential or specially developed non-credit courses approved by the relevant Curriculum or Advisory Committee in the sponsoring faculty or faculties.

3.3.2 The study program should consist of a minimum of 150 hours of classroom equivalent instruction (6 units when offered for credit).

3.3.3 The minimum admission requirements will normally be a bachelor's degree from a recognized post-secondary institution plus two years' work-related experience and approval by the Program Advisory Committee.

4. Types of Graduate Certificates or Diplomas

Graduate Certificate programs of study normally should be 6.0-7.5 units of coursework at the 500 and/or 600 level.

Graduate Diploma programs of study normally should be 9.0-12.0 units of coursework at the 500 and/or 600 level.

Graduate Certificates and Diplomas:

Consist of specified sets of regular university graduate credit or specially developed non-credit graduate courses.

May be taken by students who are concurrently admitted to a regular graduate degree program or by students admitted only for the purposes of the diploma or certificate.

May be integrated with, or complementary to, regular degree programs of graduate study, or may stand alone.

Credit courses completed in graduate certificate and diploma programs may be applied to concurrent or subsequent graduate degree programs with approval of both the faculty and the academic unit offering the degree. Program proposals for graduate certificates and diplomas will clearly describe how course credit may be articulated with degree programs.

Where a graduate certificate or diploma addresses an area of professional theory and practice the program title may specify Graduate Professional Certificate or Graduate Professional Diploma.

Admissions requirements:

Students admitted to graduate certificate and diploma programs that include credit courses must satisfy all regular admissions requirements of the Faculty of Graduate Studies as well as the specific requirements of the program.

Students admitted to graduate certificate and diploma programs that are entirely comprised of non-credit courses must satisfy the admission requirements specified for the program.

Students who have completed credit courses through prior studies may apply to have these credits transferred towards the certificate or diploma program at the time they are accepted into the program. Transfer credit will normally not be given for more than 50% of the program requirements.

5. Administration of Certificates and Diplomas

- 5.1 All certificates and diplomas containing credit courses should be developed by or in partnership with an academic department and, in the case of graduate certificates and diplomas, with the Faculty of Graduate Studies. The academic units assume responsibility for the integrity and quality of these programs.

- 5.2 Programs entirely comprised of non-credit courses will normally be managed through the Division of Continuing Studies which assumes responsibility for the integrity and quality of the programs, in consultation with the Program Advisory Committee, the Senate Committee on Continuing Studies, and in the case of graduate certificates and diplomas, the Faculty of Graduate Studies.
- 5.3 There will be a Program Advisory Committee for both the development and delivery phases of each certificate or diploma program. The Program Advisory Committee may be part of a unit's regular Curriculum or Graduate Committee. The majority of the members of the Committee should be appointed by the academic unit(s) most closely involved with the program. As programs are being created, one or more representatives of the community being served may be appointed to the Committee. Once students are enrolled in the program, a student representative may be invited to serve on the Committee.
- 5.4 The primary functions of the Program Advisory Committee shall be:
- a. to provide guidance in the program design and development phase and ensure that the program and its courses adhere to academic standards and meet the needs of learners;
 - b. to review the program on an on-going basis and recommend changes regarding curriculum, program development, and administrative procedures;
 - c. for academic credit programs, to ensure the appointment of an Academic or Graduate Advisor, who will provide academic assistance to students, and policy and management advice to program administrators;
 - d. for non-credit programs, to provide the Program Director in the Division of Continuing Studies with recommendations on the management and ongoing development of the program.
- 5.5 For programs involving credit courses, the academic unit(s) involved will appoint faculty and manage the program in consultation with the Academic Advisor, or in the case of graduate certificates and diplomas, the Graduate Advisor and the Faculty of Graduate Studies.
- 5.6 For programs offered on a non-credit basis, the Division of Continuing Studies or the unit responsible for the program will appoint faculty and manage the program in consultation with the Academic Advisor, and in the case of graduate certificates and diplomas, the Faculty of Graduate Studies.
- 5.7 The application of work completed in a certificate or diploma program toward the requirements for a regular undergraduate or graduate degree shall be governed by the academic regulations of the university and by the specific requirements of the degree program concerned.

6. Standards of Achievement

- 6.1 The courses offered in an undergraduate or graduate certificate or diploma program shall be at the usual academic standard of the academic units concerned and be evaluated at that standard.
- 6.2 When courses are offered on a non-credit basis, they will meet the standards of achievement for equivalent levels of undergraduate and graduate courses, as defined by the Advisory Committee.

AUTHORITIES AND OFFICERS

7. The officers and authorities for this policy are:
 - i) Approving Authority: Senate
 - ii) Designated Executive Officer: Vice-President Academic and Provost
 - iii) Procedural Authority: Vice-President Academic and Provost
 - iv) Procedural Officer: Associate Vice-President Academic Planning

RELEVANT LEGISLATION

University Act

PROCEDURES FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF CERTIFICATE AND DIPLOMA PROGRAMS

Procedural Authority: Senate
Procedural Officer: Vice President Academic
and Provost

Effective Date: December/07
Supersedes: May/00
Last Editorial Change:

1. When the need for a program of this type is identified, it should first be discussed with the Chairs, Directors, and Deans of those academic units and in consultation with the Office of the Registrar and Enrolment Services (ORES) to ensure coordination in relation to the implications for student recruitment, and admissions policies.
 2. To ensure that learners in new programs have access to funding through government student assistance, it is recommended that Student Awards and Financial Aid (SAFA) be consulted in the early stages of development regarding Student Aid BC Program of Study Eligibility criteria.
 3. The preparation of the program proposal will occur according to the established guidelines on the VP Academic and Provost website.
 4. Prior to review by the Senate Committee on Planning, and as early as possible in the process, detailed enrolment and budget plans (including revenue estimates, staffing and administration) and appropriate funding must be approved in principle by the VP Academic and Provost.
 5. New programs are subject to the approval of academic decision-making bodies within Faculties, the Faculty of Graduate Studies and the Division of Continuing Studies as appropriate, the Senate Planning Committee, University Senate and the Board of Governors.
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