

**POLICY FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF
MICRO-CERTIFICATE, CERTIFICATE AND
DIPLOMA PROGRAMS**

University Policy No.: AC1135
Classification: Academic and Students
Approving Authority: Senate
Effective Date: May 2023
Supersedes: December 2007
Last Editorial Change:
Mandated Review: May 2030

PURPOSE

1. This policy guides the establishment of micro-certificate, 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 micro-certificate, 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 Micro-Certificate, Certificates or Diplomas

- 3.1 Undergraduate Micro-certificate
 - 3.1.1 A micro-certificate is a small, focused, competency-based qualification that is aligned with industry, community and/or Indigenous community needs.
 - 3.1.2 A micro-certificate program may consist of regular or special topic 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 courses in a micro-certificate program must be approved by the Curriculum Committee of the academic unit offering the credential.
 - 3.1.3 Undergraduate micro-certificates should normally consist of 39-120 hours of classroom equivalent instruction (1.5 - 4.5 units or 1-3 1.5-unit courses when offered for credit).

- 3.1.4 Micro-certificate programs will have specific admission requirements according to the program design and unit selection process.
- 3.1.5 Credit courses completed in micro-certificate programs may be applied (ladder or stack) toward undergraduate certificate, diploma or degree programs with approval of the appropriate academic units offering the program. Provisions for any individual course articulation must be outlined at the initial micro-certificate proposal creation stage. Applicants who wish to apply course credits from a micro-certificate program towards another program must satisfy the current admission requirements for that program.

3.2 Undergraduate Certificate

- 3.2.1 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 courses in a certificate program must be approved by the Curriculum Committee of the academic unit offering the credential.
- 3.2.2 Undergraduate certificate programs of study should normally consist of 270-390 hours of classroom equivalent instruction (10.5 - 15 units or 7-10 1.5-unit courses when offered for credit).
- 3.2.3 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.
- 3.2.4 Credit courses completed in certificate programs may be applied toward undergraduate diploma or degree programs with approval of the appropriate academic units offering the program. Applicants who wish to apply course credits from a certificate program towards another program must satisfy the current admission requirements for that program.

3.3 Undergraduate Diploma

- 3.3.1 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 courses in a diploma program must be approved by the Curriculum Committee of the academic unit offering the credential.
- 3.3.2 Undergraduate diploma programs of study should be equivalent to one full year or more of university study (normally 15-18 units or 10-12 1.5-unit courses) when offered for credit.

- 3.3.3 Undergraduate diploma credit courses are normally at the 300 and 400 level; non-credit courses normally are offered at the equivalent level.
- 3.3.4 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.
- 3.3.5 Students who wish to transfer from a micro-certificate, certificate or diploma program to a regular undergraduate degree program must meet the current admission requirements of that program.
- 3.3.6 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.

3.4 Professional Specialization Certificate

- 3.4.1 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.
- 3.4.2 The study program consists of a minimum of 150 hours of classroom equivalent instruction (6 units when offered for credit or 4 1.5-unit courses).
- 3.4.3 The minimum admission requirements will normally be a bachelor's degree from a recognized post-secondary institution plus two years' relevant experience and approval by the Program Advisory Committee.

Transfer Credits for Micro-certificates, Certificates, Diplomas or Professional Specialization Certificates

Students who have completed credit courses through prior studies may apply to have these credits transferred towards a micro-certificate, certificate, diploma or professional specialization program at the time they are accepted into their program. Transfer credit will normally not be granted for more than 50% of the program's requirements.

4. Types of Graduate Micro-certificates, Certificates or Diplomas

Graduate Micro-certificate programs of study normally should be 1.5-4.5 units of coursework at the 500 and/or 600 level.

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 Micro-certificates, 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, certificate or micro-certificate.

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

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

Admission requirements:

Students admitted to graduate micro-certificate programs must satisfy the admission requirements specified for the micro-certificate program. After completion, students applying for subsequent programs must satisfy the current admission requirements for that program.

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 who have completed credit courses through prior studies may apply to have these credits transferred towards the micro-certificate, 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 Micro-Certificates, Certificates and Diplomas

- 5.1 All micro-certificates, certificates and diplomas containing credit courses should be developed by, or in partnership with, an academic unit. The academic units assume responsibility for the integrity and quality of these programs.
- 5.2 Credit-bearing micro-certificates, certificates or diplomas must be approved by academic decision-making bodies within the relevant Faculties and in the case of graduate micro-certificates, certificates or diplomas, the Faculty of Graduate Studies.

Senate Committee on Planning has the delegated authority to approve for-credit micro-certificate programs and will provide a regular annual report to Senate and the Board of Governors.

The development of new credit courses (excluding Special Topics courses) in the development of a micro-certificate, certificate or diploma follows the normal curriculum approval process.

- 5.3 Certificate and Diploma 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.

Micro-certificate programs entirely comprised of non-credit courses will normally be managed by the Division of Continuing Studies in partnership with the academic units that develop the program. The academic units assume responsibility for the integrity and quality of these programs.

For purposes of institutional tracking and data reporting, non-credit micro-certificates developed by academic units must be forwarded to the AVP Academic Programs, who will consult with the Deans of Continuing Studies and Faculty of Graduate Studies, as appropriate.

- 5.4 Academic units will establish a Program Advisory Committee for both the development and delivery phases of each micro-certificate, 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.

5.4.1 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 micro-certificates, 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 micro-certificate, certificate or diploma program toward the requirements for a regular undergraduate or graduate degree shall be governed by the current 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 micro-certificate, 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 Program 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 Programs

RELEVANT LEGISLATION

University Act

PROCEDURES FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF MICRO-CERTIFICATE, CERTIFICATE AND DIPLOMA PROGRAMS

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

Effective Date: May/23
Supersedes: December/07
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 (and the Faculty of Graduate Studies, in the case of graduate level programs), the AVP Academic Programs, and with the Office of the Registrar (OREG) to ensure coordination in relation to the implications for student recruitment, and admissions policies.

In the case of non-credit programs, the unit(s) proposing the program should also consult with the Division of Continuing Studies.
 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. To ensure that Indigenous learners have access to funding through their Band Councils, communities, or other organizations, it is recommended that Indigenous Academic and Community Engagement be consulted in the early stages of the program development regarding funding criteria.
 4. Development of programs of short duration will require an understanding of international visa requirements. It is recommended that International Centre for Students (ICS) is consulted in the early stages to avoid unintentional difficulties for international applicants.
 5. The preparation of the program proposal will occur according to the established guidelines on the VP Academic and Provost website.
 6. Prior to review by the Senate Committee on Planning, and as early as possible in the planning process, detailed enrolment and budget plans (including revenue estimates, staffing and administration) and appropriate funding for micro-certificate programs must be approved in principle by the VP Academic and Provost.
 7. New micro-certificate, certificate or diploma programs are subject to the approval of academic decision-making bodies within the relevant Faculties, the Faculty of Graduate Studies and the Division of Continuing Studies as appropriate, the Senate Committee on Planning, University Senate and the Board of Governors.
-