

Policy on Post-Baccalaureate Certificate Programs

(Revisions Approved by Graduate Council on January 18, 2023)

1. BACKGROUND

Certificate programs are a primary way of serving the educational needs of lifetime learners. These programs will help make TWU a center of life-long learning for the citizens of Texas and beyond. The University, however, should not offer a certificate program which could serve as a substitute for an existing master's program. Further, any certificate program must be consistent with the mission of the academic unit. The guidelines below are designed to apply to those certificate programs comprised of graduate course work, and they do not cover licensure, pre-med, and other programs that are typically taken as an undergraduate.

2. ADMISSION STANDARDS

The locus of control for establishing admissions standards will be placed with the sponsoring academic unit, subject to the following guidelines:

- A. Candidates must have completed at least a baccalaureate degree in some pre-specified (listed) field(s). In most instances, the degree should be related to the certificate program.
- B. Exceptions to the admissions standards listed in the *Graduate Catalog* must be approved by both the admitting academic unit and the Graduate School.
- C. Sponsoring academic units are encouraged (but not required) to require that certificate applicants take the appropriate graduate admissions exam, if required. A rationale should be provided if no admissions test is required.

3. CURRICULUM REQUIREMENTS

All post-baccalaureate programs must adhere to the following guidelines:

- A. In general, certificate programs should be between 12-18 semester hours at the 5000-level or above.
- B. Certificate programs which exceed 30 semester hours will be approved only under unusual circumstances.
- C. The course work comprising the certificate program must be an integrated and organized sequence of study.
- D. With the exception of internship, practicum, independent projects or clinical work, all courses for certificates will be letter graded.

- E. Students must maintain a minimum grade point average of 3.0 in all certificate course work. No more than three semester hours of "C" will count towards a certificate. A maximum of three semester hours of failed course work may be repeated. Specific programs may set stricter grade requirements.
- F. Normally, semester hours from a prior baccalaureate or master's degree may not apply toward a certificate. A maximum of three semester hours may be waived by the admitting academic unit.
- G. Course work taken as part of a certificate program may be counted toward a graduate degree at TWU with the approval of the degree-granting department or division.

4. ADMINISTRATION OF CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS

- A. All units developing certificate programs must seek consultation from the Office of Academic Assessment and Accreditation and the Office of Faculty Success to ensure proposed certificates requiring notification or approval with the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) or the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) obtain the necessary notifications or approvals.
- B. The program, wherever it may be administratively housed, must be clearly identified and labeled as a certificate program. The intent of the program must be specified in the institution's literature.
- C. A faculty director will be appointed for each certificate program. The director will be responsible for certifying the successful completion of the program's academic requirements. The Graduate School will arrange for recording the completed certificate on the student's transcript.
- D. All units developing certificate programs must seek consultation from "related" programs, departments, schools, and colleges; and all requests must be approved by the unit's appropriate curriculum committee(s), the Dean of the College, and the Dean of the Graduate School. All changes to approved certificate programs must be sent through the same channels for approval.
- E. Admission of students into certificate programs will be Certification-Only through the Graduate School, unless they are also pursuing a degree.

5. ASSESSMENT OF CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS

- A. All proposed certificate programs must state *at least one* measurable and meaningful program-level student learning outcome that indicates what students should know and/or be able to do by the end of/completion of the certificate program.
- B. All certificate programs must include at least two (2) assessment measures to assess student performance specific to the learning outcome(s), one of which must be a direct assessment of student learning.
- C. All certificate programs will prepare an annual Academic Institutional Improvement Report according to TWU institutional improvement guidelines.
- D. All certificate programs will review their certificate as an addendum to their periodic graduate program review every 7 years. The schedule of graduate program reviews is found in the Graduate Council Policy on Periodic Graduate Program Review.
- E. Accredited programs for which accreditation specifically includes the certificate program(s) must submit the accreditation review in place of the review described in (D).