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## DOC 2007-03 Guidelines for the Development of Course-based Graduate Certificate Programs

University of Dayton. Graduate School

University of Dayton. Graduate Leadership Council

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[Approved December 14, 2007]

DOC I-07-03

**PROPOSAL TO THE ACADEMIC SENATE**

**TITLE: Guidelines for the Development of Course-based Graduate Certificate Programs**

SUBMITTED BY: Graduate School, Graduate Leadership Council

DATE: December 14, 2007

ACTION: Legislative Concurrence

REFERENCE: Art. II. B. 2.

**GUIDELINES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF COURSE-BASED  
GRADUATE CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS**

*11-19-2007*

DEFINITION: Graduate certificates may be awarded to recognize academic accomplishment in a cluster of related graduate courses on a topic, theme, or area as defined by the appropriate faculty. These certificates serve as the student's record of coherent academic accomplishment and, thus, will also be noted on the student's official academic transcript. They are neither academic degree programs nor professional credentialing programs.

CERTIFICATE TYPES: Three general types of graduate certificates are anticipated:

1. Free-standing certificate designed for students who, for academic, personal, or professional reasons desire graduate level education, but do not seek a graduate degree.
2. Certificates awarded within a graduate degree program, i.e., a certificate awarded with a master's or doctoral degree, indicating that a specific and elective sequence of course work has been followed within regular program options.
3. Certificates that recognize the successful completion of additional course work that reflects academic accomplishment beyond the normal requirements for a degree.

MANAGEMENT: A certificate program may be offered by a single department or multiple departments, across academic units, or across academic institutions. In all cases, the certificate program is proposed and managed by a steering committee of faculty who have an interest in the certificate program and are affiliated with the graduate coursework that comprises the certificate program. Normally one faculty member serves as the certificate program director.

COURSE WORK: Graduate certificate programs typically consist of 3 to 6 graduate courses (9 to 18 credit hours). Significant departures from this range will require justification in the

proposal. Free-standing certificate programs requiring 21 or more hours also require the explicit approval of the Academic Senate and the Ohio Board of Regents. No more than one-third of the required course work may be graded as pass-fail.

**ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS:** Students seeking graduate certificates must apply to and be accepted for admission into either the specific certificate program or a concurrent degree program. All Graduate School policies pertaining to admissions apply. Eligibility criteria particular to the proposed certificate program (e.g., course or degree prerequisites, GRE scores, TOEFL scores, language or tool requirements, etc.) must be defined in the certificate program proposal. Admission standards for free-standing certificate programs must be consistent with those for admission into graduate degree programs as prescribed by the associated academic unit(s).

**OVERLAPPING PROGRAMS:**

- Students enrolled in free-standing certificate programs may usually apply their certificate course work toward an eventual degree. Exceptions should be noted in the certificate program proposal and communicated clearly to students upon admission into the certificate program. Students desiring to apply their certificate credits toward an eventual degree must also apply to and be accepted for admission into that degree program when the decision is made to pursue the degree program.
- Students who are admitted into a degree program and who wish to concurrently pursue a graduate certificate must notify the certificate program director in writing before half of the required hours for the certificate are completed. This intention and coursework should also be noted on the student's program of study for his or her concurrent degree program.

**TRANSFER CREDIT:** Transfer hours are not acceptable for free-standing certificate programs except in those instances where the certificate program is cross-institutional and the transfer policy is clearly articulated between the governing institutions. Transfer credit may be accepted toward certificates associated with concurrent degree programs in accordance with the transfer policies that govern those degree programs.

**INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS:** Admission to a free-standing certificate program alone is generally not sufficient for the issuance of a student visa. International students who wish to attend the University of Dayton while on a student visa should apply for admission to an appropriate degree program. International students enrolled in certificate programs are required to meet the standards for a full course of study as defined by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Service.

**FINANCIAL AID:** Students pursuing certificates who are not concurrently pursuing graduate degrees are not eligible for graduate assistantships or Graduate School fellowships. In most cases, those students also would be ineligible for federal student loans and other institutional assistance of any kind.

**ACADEMIC STANDARDS:** At a minimum, successful completion of a free-standing certificate program requires a cumulative graduate grade point average of at least 3.0 for all

courses comprising the certificate program, with no grades below “C.” No capstone experiences are required but may be included. Additional or more stringent criteria particular to the proposed certificate program (e.g., those which specify standards for performance in course work, scores on comprehensive exams, or performance in capstone experiences, etc.) should be defined in the certificate program proposal.

**TIME LIMIT:** All requirements for a free-standing graduate certificate must be satisfied within four calendar years from the time of matriculation. All requirements for a certificate associated with a concurrent degree program must be satisfied within the time limit associated with that degree program.

**COMPLETION PROCESS:** The director of the certificate program steering committee will forward the name(s) of students who have satisfied all requirements for the certificate to the appropriate academic unit(s) (i.e., College or School) for review and approval. Upon completion of the review, the academic unit(s) will forward the name(s) of those students who have completed all requirements to the Graduate School and the Office of the Registrar with the request that the certificate be awarded. The Office of the Registrar will prepare the certificate(s) and note the certificate award on student transcript(s). Students being awarded certificates independent of a degree are not eligible for participation in University commencement exercises.

**NEW CERTIFICATE PROGRAM APPROVAL:** Since all graduate degree programs are subject to review by other procedures, certificates awarded solely within a graduate degree program—descriptive of a concentration within that degree program only, not requiring any additional credits beyond those for the degree, and not noted on student transcripts—do not require further review.

Proposals for all other new graduate certificate programs must be approved by the participating academic department(s) and by the committee(s) or group(s) responsible for approval of the graduate curriculum within the participating academic unit(s) and/or academic institutions. Proposals approved at these levels should subsequently be addressed to the dean of the Graduate School and the Graduate Leadership Council who will, in turn, make an appropriate recommendation to the Provost and Registrar. The proposal must include a narrative that addresses the following:

- Title of the proposed certificate program.
- Organization of the program, including identification of:
  - Approved graduate program(s) sponsoring the certificate program;
  - A steering committee of graduate faculty identified with the certificate program (a subset of the above); and
  - A certificate program director responsible for management of the certificate program, admitting students, advising students, etc.
- A brief description of the need and demand for the certificate program, including the principal target audience for the program.
- Statement of specific educational objectives of the certificate program, including:
  - Rationale for the certificate,

- Definition of the focus of the program, and
- A brief description of its disciplinary/professional purpose and significance.
- Curriculum for the certificate program that demonstrates how the specific educational objectives will be achieved.
- Justification for the number of credit hours for the certificate program.
- Entrance, performance, and exit standards for the certificate program. Entrance standards should include a description of any pre-requisites (e.g., specific coursework, concurrent or previous academic degrees) that must be satisfied for admission to the program. Exit standards should include a discussion of how the achievement of the educational objectives of the program will be assessed.
- Faculty expertise contributing to the certificate program.
- Administrative arrangements for the proposed program, including:
  - A plan for offering (and developing, if needed) a sequence of courses that allows for the timely completion of the certificate requirements;
  - Three estimates (low, most likely, and high) of the new enrollments expected to be generated by the certificate program over a four-year period;
  - A discussion of the availability and adequacy of the resources (faculty, facilities, equipment, etc.) needed to deliver the new certificate program as a function of the estimated enrollments; and
  - If new resources will be needed, a fiscal impact statement detailing the additional resources that will be required, the source(s) of any such resources, and the resulting expected revenues and expenses.
- Statements of support or approval from the appropriate departments and academic units.

Free-standing certificate programs requiring the completion of 21 or more semester credit hours also require the approval of the Academic Senate and the submission a written request to the Chancellor of the Ohio Board of Regents three (3) months prior to the intended implementation date. The latter must include the preceding financial impact statement, regardless of whether or not new resources will be required.

**CRITERIA FOR APPROVAL:** Principles for assessing the academic quality of proposals include:

- The need and rationale for the proposed certificate must be clearly articulated and well founded.
- Course work should offer clear educational objectives at the graduate level.
- Course work comprising the certificate program must be an integrated and organized sequence of study that would be recognized within the relevant profession.

Deans, chairs, and other administrators should address resource issues in their statements of support.

RECOGNITION: Students completing a certificate program will be awarded an appropriately worded certificate, which will be designed and presented by the certificate program faculty consistent with relevant university policies. It minimally should contain the title of the certificate program, the sponsoring department(s) and/or academic unit(s), and appropriate signatures. Free standing certificates should also list the specific courses completed. It may not contain any language or symbol stating or implying that the certificate is a graduate degree. Notation will be made on the student's transcript when a certificate is awarded.

DURATION AND REVIEW: Certificate programs will be subject to periodic review consistent with their roles in relation to their associated graduate degree programs.

#### REFERENCES:

- Patterson, Wayne. "Graduate Certificate Programs: Practices in the Midwest and in the Nation," Midwestern Association of Graduate Schools, 1999, <http://associations.missouristate.edu/MAGS/1999MAGS/Patterson.htm>,
- Ohio Board of Regents, Regents' Advisory Committee on Graduate Study. "Guidelines and Procedures for Review and Approval of Graduate Degree Programs," October 2003, <http://regents.ohio.gov/rgp/pdfs/RACGS%20Guidelines%20Approved%20102403.pdf>.
- Wichita State University. "Guidelines for the Development of Graduate Certificate Programs, 2005, <http://webs.wichita.edu/depttools/depttoolsmemberfiles/gradschool/Guidelines%20for%20the%20Development%20of%20Graduate%20Certificate%20Programs.pdf>.

#### CONCURRENCES & APPROVALS OF THESE GUIDELINES:

- Office of the Registrar
- Office of Enrollment Management
- Center for International Programs
- Office of Special Programs and Continuing Education
- Graduate Leadership Council (*Approved in principle, April 27, 2007*)
- Provost's Council (*Approved in principle, May 22, 2007*)
- Academic Senate
- Provost