



Guidelines for University Certificates

Original Issue Date: November 2, 2020

Last Revised: n/a

Policy Owner: Office of Academic Affairs & Provost

Approved by the University Senate, November 2020

Certificates are awarded after successful completion of a related cluster of credit bearing courses that constitute a coherent body of study within a discipline or set of related disciplines. They may be earned on their own (stand-alone) or earned along with a corresponding degree. To appear on a student's transcript and be recognized by the Office of the University Registrar, a certificate must meet the following credit hour minimums:

Level	Credit Hour Minimum
Undergraduate (stand-alone)	16
Undergraduate (in conjunction with a degree)	12
Graduate	12

Undergraduate stand-alone certificates have a **16-credit hour minimum** to ensure that students will have as many federal financial aid options available to them as possible. Undergraduate certificates that are earned with a corresponding degree as well as all graduate level certificates must include a **minimum of 12 credit hours**. If an assemblage of courses does not meet the credit hour minimum it cannot be considered, or referred to as, a certificate program.

Prior to creating a new certificate program, the School should carefully consider demand for and interest in the certificate program, as well as how the program fits into the University's educational mission. Once these can be demonstrated, the content and course workload required by the certificate program must be clearly defined and appropriate for the level and amount of credit awarded. Like other academic programs, the certificate program must identify learning objectives and develop and implement an assessment plan to determine how well the learning objectives are being met.

Further, each certificate program must have a designated faculty Program Director who provides academic oversight of the program, including curriculum. The Program Director ensures that all necessary governance processes are followed (e.g. Curriculum Committees, School Faculty, etc.) for the creation of the program and when any changes are proposed to the program curriculum or requirements. The Program Director is responsible for notifying the Office of Academic Affairs & Provost of any new program development or any changes to existing programs and ensuring that they are all documented in the University Degree Audit. The Program Director also works closely with advisors to ensure students meet the necessary program requirements and works with their academic department to conduct the "degree certification" for the certificate. The Program Director must also acquire the School Dean's signature for the University certified list which results in academic award conferral, three times annually.

Interdisciplinary Certificates

For interdisciplinary certificates that involve more than one School, the Schools must follow the approval processes outlined in the governance documents of each participating School. Approval from both Deans

must be received and documented in writing.¹ To ensure sustained commitment to the program, it is strongly recommended that an MOU (to be effective for a period of a minimum of 3 years) between the Schools be developed. Among other items, the MOU should include:

- Evidence that the certificate is built on standard courses as opposed to special topics courses
- Commitment to offer the necessary standard courses for the length of the MOU
- Identification of the faculty Program Director from one of the partnering Schools
- Commitment to review the program at the expiration of each MOU to ensure continued viability

For new graduate-level certificates, the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies' (OGPS) Graduate Council must be notified. Further, new graduate level certificate programs in the School of Liberal Arts, the School of Science and Engineering, the School of Medicine's Biomedical Sciences, and the School of Professional Advancement (i.e. non-professional programs) must receive written approval of the new program from the Graduate Council. The proposal then follows the approval processes of all other new academic pathways, including accreditation approval, as necessary. The Office of Assessment and Institutional Research should be notified of the proposal and will assist in any institutional accreditation requirements, final approval from the Provost's Office, and coordination with the Office of the Registrar and other necessary procedures.

Undergraduate Interdisciplinary Certificates

For new undergraduate interdisciplinary certificates involving two or more Schools, Institutes, or Centers, Newcomb-Tulane College (NTC) will oversee program administration, while the faculty Program Director will maintain academic oversight. Once the proposed program has been approved through the partnering Schools and units and an MOU has been signed, it must then be presented to the Newcomb-Tulane College Curriculum Committee for review and approval.

When a proposal has been approved by the Newcomb-Tulane College Curriculum Committee it then must be submitted, for informational purposes, to the University Senate Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) in accordance with University Senate Bylaws: <https://senate.tulane.edu/resources/bylaws>.

The proposal then follows the approval processes of all other new academic pathways, including accreditation approval, as necessary.

Nomenclature & Record Keeping

Assemblages of credit-bearing courses that do not meet the credit hour minimum requirements may not be referred to as certificates. In these cases, the coursework would appear on the transcript but there would not be a special notation. The Office of the University Registrar will not maintain records for offerings that do not meet the credit hour minimum requirements of a certificate. The School or offering Department is responsible for maintaining all records of completion of these arrangements in perpetuity.

Offerings that do not carry academic credit may not be referred to as certificates. The School or offering Department is responsible for maintaining all records of participation or completion in perpetuity.

The use of Tulane's seal is limited to University recognized certificate programs, as described in this policy. Any recognition of completion of offerings that do not carry academic credit or do not meet the credit hour minimum for a certificate may not resemble a Tulane diploma.

¹ Note that you may submit Committee Meeting Agendas and Minutes to show discussion and approval of new pathways.

Existing Certificate Programs

Existing certificate programs that do not meet the minimum credit guidelines as listed above shall be allowed to continue under current nomenclature provided that they are reported to the Office of Academic Affairs & Provost for review and record keeping within a reasonable time of enactment of this policy. In every case, any such program shall disclose in its written description(s) and marketing materials that the certificate will not appear on a student's transcript.

Agreements with Other Institutions

No certificate shall make representations about the value of its credits at other institutions. However, this policy also shall not prohibit other institutions from awarding a certificate based on Tulane University credits in conjunction with a joint program or other cooperation. In such case, however, the participating Department or School of Tulane University shall indicate in its description of the program that any such certificate is awarded by the cooperating institution only.