

THE GRADUATE CERTIFICATE  
(Policies and Procedures for Review, Approval, and Implementation)  
Effective August 20, 2001  
Revised \_\_\_\_\_

## **Description**

A graduate certificate program is a stand-alone credential that typically consists of 12-15 credit hours of graduate coursework in a focused area of study. The graduate certificate or post-master's graduate certificate may provide individuals with specialized training in a particular academic and/or occupational area, as well as augment professional skills to help advance their careers. Many of UNC Charlotte's graduate certificate programs consist of a subset of courses required for a master's degree, so they enable individuals to quickly gain admission and begin a program of study before committing to a master's degree. Credit hours earned in a certificate program may be applied to a master's or doctoral program pursued either in conjunction with or after the certificate has been awarded. Note that credits earned in a certificate program may not be used to satisfy the requirements of a second certificate program.

For academic units, certificates can be used to test the viability of possible new degrees prior to going through the formal processes to prepare and review a new degree proposal. They provide a valuable pipeline to recruit students into existing degree programs and also provide meaningful interdisciplinary opportunities. Conversely, certificates can also be discontinued at any time if no longer viable.

In general, admission requirements for the Graduate Certificate are:

- A bachelor's degree, or its equivalent, from a regionally accredited college or university
- GPA of at least 2.75 (based on a 4.0 scale) on all previous work completed beyond high school (secondary school).
- An online application through the Graduate School's application system
- A statement of purpose
- Unofficial transcripts of all college course work attempted
- Official and satisfactory scores on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or the International English Language Testing System (IELTS), if English is not the applicant's native language and he or she has not earned a post-secondary degree from a U.S. institution
- Given that certificates are not degree programs and are intended to provide streamlined educational opportunities, standardized test scores (e.g., GRE, GMAT, MAT) are not required for admission.

Additional administrative considerations for admission and completion requirements for certificates may be found in the current version of the Graduate Catalog and should be consulted when preparing a request to establish a new certificate.

**Proposal Format** (no new courses are required or proposed for the certificate)

**Note: If new courses are required for the certificate, the standard Long Form for course and curriculum changes must be used for the certificate approval process.**

TITLE: \_\_\_\_\_

ORIGINATING DEPARTMENT: \_\_\_\_\_

ADMINISTERING UNIT (if different): \_\_\_\_\_

First Term Certificate is to be offered \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Contact Name \_\_\_\_\_

Graduate Program Director Name (if different) \_\_\_\_\_

A: Summary (include a statement that the certificate is to be implemented using existing courses only.)

B: Catalog Copy

1. Admission Requirements
2. Program Description (include requirements for completion of certificate. A separate listing of courses may be included with the proposal.)
3. Will the certificate program be delivered on campus, 100% online program, or a combination? Describe any distance education components in detail.

C: Justification

1. Need for program
2. Impact statement
  - a. What group of students would be served by this certificate?
  - b. What impact will this certificate have on existing curricula?
  - c. What is the projected annual enrollment for the first five years? Include "new" student enrollment counts and indicate if the program will primarily be pursued by students who are concurrently enrolled in a master's program or only enrolled in the certificate program.
  - d. Are any new resources required to implement the certificate? If "yes" what are they and how will these needs be met?
3. Will a tuition increment be charged for this certificate? If "yes", how much?

D: Student Learning Outcomes (provide SLOs in template format)

E: For an educational program to be eligible for Title IV federal financial aid (unsubsidized student loans), it must lead to a degree, prepare students for further study, or lead to gainful employment. Because certificate programs do not necessarily lead to a degree, the U.S. Department of Education requires institutions to disclose certain information about the programs. If the proposed certificate is approved, it will be subject to annual Gainful

Employment approval, disclosure, and most likely reporting requirements as established by the U.S. Department of Education.

F: How will the certificate be evaluated?

G: Letters of support or consultation as required. All units sponsoring and participating in the certificate should approve the proposal and provide letters of support.

H: Signatures and date (as appropriate). If the certificate is interdisciplinary, signatures from each participating unit are required.

1. Department Chair
2. Graduate Program Director
3. College Graduate Curriculum Committee Chair (if appropriate)
4. College Dean
5. Graduate Council Chair

#### **Procedure for certificate program approval**

1. The originating unit files the proposal simultaneously with the appropriate college or colleges and with the Graduate Council. If any issues arise during the review with the college(s) or Graduate Council, the process will stop until the issue is resolved.
2. Approvals by the appropriate college committees and deans, the Graduate Council and the appropriate consultations (if required) are forwarded to the Dean of the Graduate School (DGS). The DGS, having determined that all appropriate consultations have been conducted and that the home college has approved the proposal with wording consistent to that approved by the Graduate Council, forwards the proposal to Academic Affairs to be placed on the FEC Consent Calendar.
3. The proposing unit and the DGS will work cooperatively to ensure timely consideration by all involved.
4. Certificate programs will be approved for a five-year period. They are reviewed for renewal every five years using the Certificate Renewal Process approved by the Graduate Council (4/4/2006).
5. Certificates can be modified at any time through the same procedure as new programs, or can be ended at an earlier date at the request of the program or discretion of the Provost if they are no longer justified.