

This document supersedes GFC Document 877, Revised and Approved September 20, 2010, through Appendix B.

## POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT, STRUCTURE, AND ADMINISTRATION OF GRADUATE CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS

### **Description**

A certificate program is a sequence of courses that provides participants with specialized knowledge and skills for personal enrichment, professional advancement, or career change. Certificate programs may provide

- a basic introduction to an established field of study
- an interdisciplinary approach linking several fields
- a concentrated focus on a sub-field.

In most cases, certificates function independently of degree programs.

### **Curriculum**

The curriculum should be organized into a structured progression or cohesive collection of courses. It is recommended that no more than 20% of the credits shall be in independent study or research. A minimum of 15 and a maximum of 21 credits are recommended. An integrating course or other capstone experience is recommended.

### **Administration**

At a minimum, a program director or coordinator must be designated. The Graduate School recognizes this individual as the signature authority for recommending admission and dismissal from the certificate program, approval of transfer credit, and verification of courses completed. If the certificate program does not have an advisory board, the certificate director must be a member of the graduate faculty.

An advisory board is strongly recommended for program administration and assessment. The majority of the advisory body must be graduate faculty. The following types of decisions are restricted to graduate faculty, and to academic staff holding probationary or indefinite appointments:

- Recommending student matriculation, continuation, and certificate completion verification
- Determining certificate requirements, such as courses, internships, capstone experiences, minimum credits and grades

For certificates sponsored by multiple schools/colleges, a lead school or college must be designated. The Graduate School recognizes this school or college as having the approval authority for the certificate program. It is expected that the lead school/college will consult with constituent units and any certificate advisory committee before submitting changes to a certificate.

### **Instructors**

It is recommended that members of the graduate faculty teach all courses in a graduate certificate program.

### **Program Authorization**

Requests will follow the Format for a Graduate Certificate Program Proposal (see Appendix A) and must be authorized as indicated on the current Academic Approval Matrix.

### **Program Evaluation and Reauthorization**

Certificate programs are approved for 510-year periods. During the ~~5th~~-10th year, a review will be conducted. A decision regarding program reauthorization will be made by the GFC following the ~~quinquennial~~-decennial evaluation. The process and self-study requirements for certificate reviews is specified in GFC document 1360.

Students who are currently enrolled in a certificate program that is not reauthorized may complete the program, subject to course availability.

### **Admission**

All students interested in obtaining a graduate certificate must formally apply through the Graduate School before completion of six credits in the certificate sequence, and pay any required application fees.

Applicants must possess a baccalaureate degree and have a minimum 2.75 cumulative undergraduate grade point average to be admitted into a certificate program.

Certificate programs may require additional information or have additional criteria for admission. Certificate programs will inform the Graduate School of their admission recommendation. The final admission decision is made by the Graduate School.

### **Pursuing two certificate programs at one time**

A student may work toward a maximum of two UWM graduate certificates concurrently. This does not change the time limit for completion of each certificate.

### **Transfer Credit**

No more than 20% of the required credits may be taken at an institution other than UWM. These courses are subject to Graduate School transfer policy and must be approved by the director of the certificate program.

### **Articulation between Graduate Certificate Programs**

A maximum of 6 required credits may double count from one graduate certificate program to another, provided that both programs specify the courses as approved, required, or elective. Programs that want to have an informal coordination between two or more certificates would do so by arranging their requirements so they appropriately overlap, provided that the courses are listed as required courses for the certificate

### **Articulation between Certificate and Degree Programs**

1. Credits and courses required for a certificate may double count toward meeting UWM graduate degree requirements subject to the following restrictions:
  - Degree programs must approve the courses from certificates that can double count toward the degree.
  - All credits taken in completion of certificate requirements may count towards a UWM graduate degree as long as they do not contribute more than 90% of the total credits needed to obtain the degree. (NOTE: Students in Ph.D. programs must still complete the minimum residency requirements.)
  - Certificate courses used toward meeting degree requirements must be completed within the time limit for transfer credit.
2. Courses completed for a degree may be counted toward a subsequent certificate, subject to all certificate policy requirements.
3. A course may count toward no more than one certificate and one degree.
4. Students may not earn a certificate subsequent to a concentration in the same area.

### **Time Limit**

Certificate program time limits shall be established as follows:

18 or fewer credits	3 years from initial enrollment in the certificate sequence
19 or more credits	4 years from initial enrollment in the certificate sequence.

For those certificates that require simultaneous degree enrollment and are awarded concurrent with the degree, the time limit shall be the same as that of the degree program. Students pursuing all other types of certificates must complete the certificate requirements within the time limits stated above even if they are simultaneously enrolled in a graduate degree program.

### **Certificate Completion**

Students must submit an application for certificate completion to the Graduate School, and pay any required completion application fees.

For qualifying students, the certificate program director will verify for the Graduate School the course number and title, grade, and semester of enrollment for all courses that meet certificate program

requirements. Certificate completion will be posted on a student's official transcript in line with UWM's official conferral dates, and an official paper certificate will be sent to the student from the Graduate School.

### **Criteria for Awarding a Certificate**

Graduate certificates are awarded to students who:

- Meet the certificate requirements within the allotted time limit
- Have a minimum 3.00 overall grade point average (without rounding)
- Have a minimum 3.00 grade point average in certificate courses (without rounding)

### **Certificates Approved Before Semester I, 2002-03**

Twelve-credit certificates that were approved by the GFC, the Graduate School, and the Provost prior to fall 2002 (implementation date of the original certificate policy – GFC document 877) will be allowed to remain at twelve credits.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION**

1. The rules of GFC Document 877 revised September 20, 2010 apply to certificates earned through spring 2015.
2. The rules in GFC Document 1357 apply to certificates in progress as of summer 2015.
3. As of summer 2015, any certificate courses not used toward meeting degree requirements prior to summer 2015 may be used toward a subsequent degree subject to the rules of GFC Document 1357.
4. Recommendations 1-3 shall be enacted upon approval from Academic Affairs.

## APPENDIX A

### Format for a Graduate Certificate Program Proposal

#### I. PROGRAM IDENTIFICATION

- 1.1 Title of Proposed Graduate Certificate** State proposed name as it would appear on a UWM student transcript.
- 1.2 Department(s) or Functional Equivalent(s) Sponsoring the Certificate** List units that will have an active role in program administration beyond offering required or elective courses.
- 1.3 College(s), School(s) or Functional Equivalent(s) Sponsoring the Certificate** List schools and colleges with budgetary authority for certificate administration
  - 1.3.1 List lead School or College (if there are multiple sponsors at this level)
- 1.4 Timetable for Initiation**

#### II. RATIONALE

Discuss reason(s) for establishing a new graduate certificate program in this area of study.

#### III. INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

- 3.1 Relationship to Mission of Institution**
- 3.2 Relationship to/Impact on Other UWM Programs**

#### IV. NEED

Discuss potential demand for the program, target population, estimated enrollment, and comparable programs offered at other institutions.

#### V. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION AND EVALUATION

##### 5.1 Description:

- 5.1.1 Provide a brief narrative description of the program.
- 5.1.2 Define the nature of the program:  
For example, is it a disciplinary concentration where the goal is to achieve a measure of depth within a defined area? Is it multidisciplinary where the goal is

to broaden one's knowledge and/or perspective on a particular area of study? Is this a graduate/undergraduate certificate (i.e., one in which the courses are U/G and undergraduates and graduates both earn the certificate, but are differentiated by how they register for the courses)?

- 5.1.3 List learning objectives and competencies that will be attained through this certificate. If relevant, discuss professional or certification/licensing standards that are addressed in the proposed curriculum.
- 5.1.4 List the mode(s) of instruction (i.e. in-person, on-line, hybrid).
- 5.1.5 Discuss whether this certificate program prepares students for gainful employment in a recognized occupation. If it does and is eligible for Title IV financial aid, supply the following information:
  - Occupations the program prepares students to enter
  - Occupational profiles
  - Costs for books and supplies
- 5.2 **Curriculum – Courses and Credits:** Indicate number of credits and the specific courses or choice of electives that make up the certificate program. Describe any capstone requirement.
- 5.3 **Admission requirements and procedures:** Identify minimum grade point average (G.P.A.) from the undergraduate and/or post-baccalaureate degree, any specific background preparation, and any other requirements for admission.
- 5.4 **Allowance for transfer credit (if any):** Transfer credit is subject to the rules stated above. If the program has a more restrictive policy for transfer credit, that should be stated here.
- 5.4 **Completion requirements:** State minimum grades required in specific courses, if any, and cumulative G.P.A. required in certificate courses
- 5.5 **Time limit:** Indicate length of time allowed to complete the requirements for the certificate.
- 5.6 **Certificate conferral:** State whether certificate will be awarded upon completion of certificate requirements or concurrently with completion of a specific degree program.
- 5.7 **Program Administration:** State the name and administrative title (e.g. Director, Coordinator) of the person who will serve as the Graduate School liaison for the certificate program (aka the Certificate Program Representative). Provide names and roles of others involved in program administration (e.g. curricular development and review, student advising). Describe how program administrators or advisory bodies will

be appointed.

**5.8 Participating Faculty:** Please provide a list of participating faculty.

VI. RESOURCES

Address issues of cost to the university and any special charges or fees.

VII. BULLETIN COPY

Submit copy for the *Graduate School Bulletin* following the template provided by the Graduate School.

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