

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA GRADUATE SCHOOL GRADUATE CERTIFICATE POLICY

Approved by Graduate Council October 20, 2011

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Definition

A Graduate Certificate program is a formal collection of courses that together form a coherent program of study offered through an academic unit. A Graduate Certificate is recognition of the acquisition of knowledge and skills in a given field of study. A Graduate Certificate is an academic credential granted by the University of Florida. As such, all Graduate Certificates must follow the requirements of admission, successful completion of approved graduate level coursework, application to receive the credential, and enrollment during the term in which the certificate is awarded and posted to the transcript.

Student Eligibility

1. Currently enrolled UF graduate students may complete a Graduate Certificate in a specialized field within their major or a Graduate Certificate in another field that enhances their career interests.
2. Non-degree seeking students may pursue a Graduate Certificate with the approval of the academic unit offering the certificate as long as the applicant has at least a bachelor's degree or equivalent from a regionally accredited institution.
3. All Graduate Certificate applicants must apply and be admitted to the certificate program following the processes and procedures of the University, the academic unit offering the Certificate and the College dean or designee.
4. For non-degree-seeking or post-baccalaureate students, course credits identified as part of certificate requirements, but successfully completed prior to formal admission to the certificate program may be credited toward the certificate with the approval of the academic unit and College, so long as at least half of the credit hours required for the certificate are earned during or after the semester in which the student is admitted to the certificate program.

Examples: In a 12 hour graduate certificate program – the student must earn 6 or more credits after being admitted to the graduate certificate program; In a 9 hour

graduate certificate program composed of 3 – 3 hour courses the student must earn 6 of the credits after being admitted to the graduate certificate program; In a 15 hour graduate certificate program composed of 5 – 3 hour courses the student must earn 9 of the credits after being admitted to the graduate certificate program.

5. Currently enrolled UF graduate students will be permitted to count previously taken coursework toward a Graduate Certificate to which they have been admitted, if approved by the academic unit offering the Graduate Certificate and by the academic unit offering their primary graduate degree program. As with non-degree-seeking students, at least half of the credit hours required for the certificate must be earned during or after the semester in which a degree-seeking student is admitted to the certificate program.
6. With approval from the academic unit offering the certificate, a student who withdraws from a graduate degree program at UF may count the entirety of previously earned credits needed for the completion of a certificate of the same name as the major, concentration or minor from which they withdrew. In such cases, the credits may only be applied if the student is approved for the certificate within three semesters of withdrawing.

Example: A student pursuing a master's degree in a particular major has earned all 12 credits necessary for a certificate program of the same name. If the student withdraws from the graduate degree program, they may apply for and be allowed by the unit to count all 12 credits toward the certificate if they are approved to do so within three semesters of withdrawal.

Criteria for Completion of a Graduate Certificate

1. Consistent with longstanding Graduate Council policy, the only passing grades for students in a Graduate Certificate program are A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, and S.
2. All course work used for the Graduate Certificate must meet a minimum overall 3.0 GPA (truncated).
3. Credits earned at another institution may not be used to meet the requirements of a UF Graduate Certificate.
4. Coursework and credits used for a UF Graduate Certificate may also be used to fulfill some requirements for a UF graduate degree, subject to existing Graduate School policy and with the approval of the academic unit offering the graduate degree program. In general, this criterion would be met by the prior inclusion of the

graduate certificate coursework in the approved plan of study for the graduate degree.

5. Graduate Certificates may include courses that are a part of an academic program or courses created specifically for the Certificate.
6. Specified courses may be identified as required courses for more than one Graduate Certificate. In that circumstance the credit hours associated with such a course may contribute to only one of the Graduate Certificates. Additional graduate level coursework, approved by the academic unit, will have to be completed to meet the credit hour requirement of the second or subsequent certificate.
7. Coursework and credits used to satisfy the requirements for a Graduate Certificate may not be used to meet the requirements of a minor.
8. Students currently enrolled in a graduate degree program may not be admitted to a Graduate Certificate program that has the same name as the major, concentration or minor specified as part of their graduate degree program.

Responsibility for Developing and Overseeing a Graduate Certificate:

1. Graduate Certificate programs shall be developed and overseen by an academic unit and governed within the Graduate School. The approval process includes the graduate faculty in the academic unit, the College curriculum committee, the College Dean and the Graduate Council. Graduate Certificates must be offered through an academic unit currently approved to offer one or more graduate degree programs in the relevant field.
2. Graduate Certificates may only be offered in fields of instruction defined by a CIP (Classification of Instructional Programs) code for which the University of Florida has been approved at the graduate level.
3. Graduate Certificates may be created as a collaboration among multiple academic units, Centers or Institutes as long as all parties agree in writing, and at least one of the collaborating entities is a recognized graduate academic unit. Such collaborative graduate certificates must be administered by a single academic entity.
4. Graduate Certificate programs may be administered by campus units such as a Center or Institute that does not offer degrees or courses for academic credit.
5. Proposals for Graduate Certificates must include student learning outcomes and appropriate assessment methods.

6. Units are responsible for managing assessment of student learning outcomes in cases in which students withdraw from a degree program and enter a certificate program after already completing the coursework required for the certificate.
7. A Graduate Certificate must include a minimum of 9 credits hours of approved UF graduate-level coursework.
8. Graduate Council approval is required when closing a graduate certificate program. Notification must include a plan for permitting currently enrolled students to finish the program.
9. Changes to the number of required credits or course levels (e.g. professional to graduate) require Graduate Council approval.
10. Undergraduate coursework cannot be used for credit toward a Graduate Certificate. Professional coursework may contribute to a Graduate Certificate if inclusion of the professional course(s) was approved by the Graduate Council as part of the Graduate Certificate approval process.
11. Any Graduate Certificate program that has no current students and has not awarded a certificate in the previous 5 years is subject to closure or required resubmission through the approvals process.
12. An existing Graduate Certificate program offered on campus may be offered in the online modality without additional review/approval by Graduate Council if it is composed of the same courses and requirements as the on-campus certificate and differs only in the mode of delivery. Such an addition or change in the mode of delivery may require approval by other university entities (e.g. the Office of Teaching and Technology).
13. Academic units interested in creating, modifying or closing a Graduate Certificate must do so through the tracking system at – www.approval.ufl.edu. The Graduate School welcomes preliminary conversations prior to the development of a formal proposal and initiation of the approval process.

Issues to Address in Proposing a Graduate Certificate

1. The justification for offering a Graduate Certificate must include clearly stated academic, workforce or professional development objectives that are distinct from revenue opportunities.
2. Graduate Certificate enrollees who are not currently UF graduate students must complete their coursework for the Certificate with a 3.0 or higher GPA. They must be

informed that only coursework with a letter grade of B or better will be eligible for transfer into a graduate program. All relevant Graduate Council policies apply to any proposed transfer of credits from a Graduate Certificate to a graduate degree program.

3. For graduate programs offering concentrations, the difference between the concentration and any Graduate Certificate must be clearly delineated on the New Certificate Form.
4. Programs that currently have students pursuing a Graduate Certificate must provide a plan for transitioning their students into a Graduate Council approved Graduate Certificate.

Administrative Logistics

1. Graduate Certificates will be awarded after successful completion of the approved Certificate program and will be posted to the academic transcript. Comments posted to the transcript will be titled “Completed Graduate Certificate in [title] [date].” The Office of the University Registrar will print and distribute Graduate Certificates to the recipients.
2. The Graduate School will maintain a list of approved Graduate Certificates on the Graduate School Website. Academic Units may describe their approved Graduate Certificate programs in their Fields of Instruction in the Graduate Catalog.
3. Only programs of study that involve UF for-credit coursework need to seek approval through the approval system. Programs of study, courses or single classes offered for purpose of continuing education or similar activities may not be termed “Graduate Certificate” and may not bear the official UF seal and will not appear on a UF transcript. Such programs may issue “Certificates of Completion”.
4. The academic unit will notify the Division of Enrollment Management when students are admitted into a Graduate Certificate program, following procedures developed and promulgated by the Division of Enrollment Management.
5. Students must be registered during the term in which they receive the Graduate Certificate.
6. Students must apply to receive a Graduate Certificate by the mid-point of the term in which they plan to complete the certificate program requirements.
7. Prospective Graduate Certificate students who do not yet wish to apply formally for the certificate program may register as non-degree seeking students for purposes of taking a limited number of courses that may ultimately be credited toward a

graduate certificate. Consistent with UF policy, enrollment as a non-degree seeking student is established on a term-by-term basis and must be approved by the academic unit and the Office of the University Registrar. Formal admission to the Graduate Certificate program eliminates the requirement for term-by-term approval for enrollment.

8. Verification of a bachelor's degree or equivalent from a regionally accredited institution is required of all graduate certificate participants.
9. While successful completion of a Graduate Certificate may be used as one element in a holistic assessment of a prospective student's eligibility for admission to the Graduate School, it should not be seen as substituting for other admission requirements.