

ELIZABETH CITY STATE UNIVERSITY

Academic Certificate Program Guidelines

Preamble

Certificates based in credit-bearing undergraduate coursework benefit both students working on their undergraduate degrees and those community members who seek to develop or improve their knowledge of and skills in a particular area. Certificates are intended to complement the programs followed by degree-seeking students and to enhance the skills of community members in their chosen field of study. The University of North Carolina System recognizes certificate programs at the baccalaureate and post-baccalaureate level. The following policy will serve as guidance for the development, approval, and granting of certificates utilizing credit-bearing courses at ECSU. Many programs are designed for working professionals seeking to add expertise to their resume or those who wish to make a career change without taking general education courses. Some programs offer additional professional credentialing, while others recognize competence in a technical skill or a field of study. When appropriate, ECSU encourages interdisciplinary and inter-institutional Certificate Programs.

I. Definitions

A certificate program includes at least 9 hours of coursework. Certificates leading to professional licensure are exempt from this guideline. Further definitions relevant to the certificate program are found in ECSU Policy 300.7.1 which shall control in the case of conflict between these two policies.

II. Operational Guidelines for Academic Certificate Programs

A. Approval of Academic Certificate Programs

1. Approval Process

- a. Certificate programs are to be proposed by the department housing the proposed program. They will be approved through the normal curricular process outlined for the approval of programs through the University Curriculum Committee and concluding with the approval of the Academic Administrative and Planning Council.
- b. New courses may be created for the purposes of the certificate program, with approval following the usual method for course approval. Certificate programs may identify a capstone course.
- c. The application for the certificate program should include an identification of the target market and any prerequisites for admission to the program.
- d. ECSU encourages interdisciplinary certificate programs. All units participating in a Certificate Program must indicate approval of the proposed certificate and must agree on where the certificate will be housed.

- e. Once a certificate program is approved, the Office of the Registrar will include the certificate on the list of approved official transcript remarks. They will also communicate with affected offices about implementation procedures, including assigned codes/plans and other settings in the student information system to facilitate campus reporting and student account charges.
 - f. Degree-seeking students will be double coded Certificates for degree-seeking students will involve assigning student to two 'plans' while maintain their degree 'program';
 - g. Non-degree-seeking students will have a stand-alone 'program' specific to the certificate. The Office of the Registrar will also be responsible for updating transcripts accordingly upon notification of certificate completion. The Office of Institutional Research will report changes in the list of active certificate programs to the UNC System office and maintain internal documentation for accreditation purposes.
 - h. Certificate programs must be reviewed every two years along with other curriculum reviews by the department.
2. Eligibility and Use of Credits
- a. Students seeking certificates must be enrolled either full-time or part-time at ECSU. Individuals not currently seeking bachelors' degrees may apply through the admissions process for special status to pursue certificate programs provided they meet the eligibility criteria set by the program. Community members seeking certificates only may be admitted on a case by case basis based on their experience should they not meet the prerequisites stated for admission to the program.
 - b. Non-degree seeking students seeking a certificate are expected to indicate their intent to seek that certificate no later than their second semester taking courses that are used to fulfill the requirements of the certificate. Certificate program coordinators within the hosting department are charged with the tracking of individuals seeking certificates. Degree-seeking students will file for any earned certificates when they file for graduation.
 - c. No course used in completion of a major, minor, or concentration can be counted toward the completion of a certificate with the exception of any majors that require certificate as part of a specialization of the major. Courses that serve as prerequisites for courses included in the certificate program are exempt from this restriction. Programs hosting certificates are responsible for advising students seeking certificates housed in the department.
3. Registration
- a. Individuals enrolling in courses toward certificate programs must meet the same prerequisites as students enrolling in those courses seeking a bachelor's degree absent approval from the department chair.

- b. Courses for certificate programs will not have seats saved for those in certificate programs, nor will there be a special certificate program enrollment period.
4. Course Credit Transfers, Substitutions and UNC Online Credit
No more than 3 credit hours or 20% of the credits required by the program, whichever is more, may be completed through transfer credit, including that granted through UNC Online may be transferred into the program. Course substitutions are only available for courses already used elsewhere in the student's academic program, with the caveat that no more than 40% of the certificate program can be substituted.
5. Listing of programs
Certificate programs will be published in the undergraduate catalog with the offerings of the host department.
6. Grading
Courses offered toward certificate programs are credit-bearing courses and are graded using the same scale authorized through University Policy 300.1.7.
7. Billing
Courses offered toward certificate programs will be billed at the same rate as courses taken for credit toward bachelor's degree programs.
8. Granting of Certificates
 - a. Certificate candidates must be in good academic standing and must earn a C or higher in all courses pertaining to the certificate absent higher standards set by the hosting department that are identified at the time of the approval of the certificate.
 - b. All certificates awarded after successful completion of a certificate program will result in an official remark on the student academic transcript.
 - c. Students must apply for the granting of the certificate following the graduation application timeline. Earning a certificate does not authorize a candidate to participate in commencement activities. Departments hosting certificate programs may choose to hold events separate from the university commencement exercises to recognize those who have earned certificates but are not expected to do so. Special admits who are not degree seeking may be granted certificates at the commencement following completion of their certificate program. Degree-seeking students will receive the certificates they have earned at the time they earn their degrees.