

Undergraduate Certificates at the University of Kentucky

An Undergraduate Certificate is an integrated group of courses (as defined here 12 or more credits) that are 1) cross-disciplinary, but with a thematic consistency, and 2) form a distinctive complement to a student's major and degree program, or 3) leads to the acquisition of a defined set of skills or expertise that will enhance the success of the student upon graduation. Undergraduate Certificates meet a clearly defined educational need of a constituency group, such as continuing education or accreditation for a particular profession; provide a basic competency in an emerging area within a discipline or across disciplines; or respond to a specific state mandate.

Undergraduate Certificates are becoming an increasingly important component of the total range of educational opportunities offered by a modern, comprehensive research university. Certificates provide the opportunity for students to pursue a topic that complements their undergraduate degree program or the opportunity to explore outside the range of their undergraduate degree.

Why do we need Undergraduate Certificates?

Undergraduate Certificates can serve several important purposes for our programs and students. Undergraduate Certificates will provide:

- **The ability to respond to emerging and cutting edge fields:** Certificates provide a way to make new, innovative programs emergent: Arts and Sciences plans to offer certificates in newly forming areas so students can show competence in response to contextual emerging changes in their respective fields. To successfully do this, flexibility would be key, such as not requiring certificates to be interdisciplinary. However, some topics will require that interdisciplinary approaches be utilized
- **The ability to certify specializations:** Assist students in developing competency in areas of specialization where there is no major or degree program.
- **Potential motivation for innovative course development:** Faculty could be motivated to explore new areas, address emerging needs, or build niche specialties.
- **Flexibility to address universal needs:** Certificates allow for responsiveness to emerging needs and contextual changes and are more flexible than a minor. There are many areas on campus that have experiences that do not fit 'traditional' academic models such as creative arts projects, theatre experiences, architectural projects, and international study (intellectual learning paired with international experience).
- **An enhancement for recruitment to UK or to a College:** Certificates would provide another tool for attracting higher quality students to whom innovative certificates appeal (therefore the need for flexibility within the certificate to be able to respond to the context and needs of each major and area of study to be cutting edge).
- **An enrichment and retention opportunity:** Certificates may also be used to polish and help retain students following recruitment. Examples: Global Scholars (B & E) was created in

response to complaints of employers- it is an enrichment program (it builds professionalism vs. specific content only). It is much like an honors track in business; high achieving freshmen join as a cohort and engage early with the college enhancing. This also enhances retention with is important due to B& E's selective admission's requirement. Another program offered along with Engineering- SEAM (2nd semester)- is tied into a living learning community and is also meant to be an honors-like track. The Global Scholars program will be connected with a living learning community next year, further enhancing its potential for engaging students.

Proposed Requirements for an Undergraduate Certificate:

- A minimum of 12 credits of course work taken for a letter grade.
- At least 12 credits must be 200 level or above, and a minimum of 6 credits must be at the 300-level or above.
- The student must complete a three-credit breadth component. The breadth component requires that a student take courses in at least two disciplines, with a minimum of three credits to be completed in a second discipline.
- Student must earn a C or better in each required certificate course to receive the certificate.
- Certificates will only be awarded to students who successfully complete a degree, or have completed a four-year degree.
- No more than nine credits taken for a certificate can be used to satisfy the requirements for the student's bachelor's degree, a minor, or another certificate, exclusive of free or
- unrestricted electives.

Administrative and Academic Structure:

- There must be a designated Faculty Director for each certificate. The Director shall represent the curriculum and any affiliated faculty in multidisciplinary certificates.
- Minimum admission requirements for a certificate will be that students must be in good academic standing and can enter at any time in their undergraduate career. However, the faculty offering the certificate can impose additional requirements for a certificate.
- Courses taken prior to admission to the certificate can be used in the certificate.
- The Director approves the individual certificate curriculum for each student and informs the Registrar when the certificate is complete and may be awarded.
- The awarded certificate is to be posted on the student's official transcript.
- The certificate will not appear on the diploma. Programs may award a paper certificate, to be signed by the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education or the appropriate designee (e.g., a College Dean) and the Certificate Director.
- All certificate proposals must be developed in consultation with faculty in contributing or affected academic units. The proposal must be approved through the faculty curriculum

committee of the college or colleges participating in the certificate, and then submitted to Undergraduate Council. Certificates approved by UC will then be forwarded to University Senate for final approval.

- An undergraduate certificate curriculum shall be approved or re-approved for operation for a period of 6 years (or a lesser period if requested). Toward the end of the 5th year of its duration, the certificate Director shall prepare a report summarizing its status, operations, and certificate awardees during that period of time, and indicating its prospects for the future if renewal of the certificate curriculum is sought. The report will be provided to participating college Deans and to the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education. If a certificate is suspended or terminated, students currently enrolled in the curriculum shall have a reasonable period of time, not to exceed three years, to complete the requirements for the certificate.

Some collected comments to be considered.

Jeff Rogers

I am personally in favor of a definition for a certificate that is more interdisciplinary and more upper-division. It seems to me we are trying to make a certificate be a lot of different things at once, a quasi-minor, an honors program and perhaps what I understand as a certificate. My major concern is that UK certificates carry the same weight and have similar meaning to certificates from University of Michigan, Ohio State NC-Chapel Hill. That is what, I believe, will most benefit our students in the long term, as they are talking to potential employers nationally and internationally and as they are applying to graduate programs.

Elisa D'Angelo

I really like the idea of offering certificates and I like most aspects of the proposal. However, it seems like the third and sixth bullet in the proposed requirements section are somewhat redundant....is there a way that we can simplify these two related requirements into one?

A: I believe these are mutually exclusive. Point 3 says you must have at least 3 hours outside the major. Point 6 says you may have no more than 6 hours of overlap with your degree or a minor.

Karen Badger

I also think that 12 hours is on the light end of a certificate (and 15 is reasonable) based on what I saw other places so it all seems fine. I think what needs to be corrected is the perception the committee considers that 100 level courses are being perceived as 'filler' courses vs. that certificates are traditionally and usually built out of upper division courses not lower division courses.

Susan Carvalho

The faculty on my committee felt strongly that a 100-level language course should not be looked upon as "empty hours" apart from the twelve "core hours." Instead, the language course is a critical part of the analytical and cultural-background core of the certificate program. So they were not convinced of the rationale for requiring the certificate to have 15 hours if 3 of them are to be at the 100-level.

Proposed Senate Rules Language

Mullen: Hi all, I offer wording on a Senate Rule for UG Certificates that mirrors that for Grad Certificates. I checked CPE academic policy, I do not find language re: UG Certificate approval.

USR 4.2.X

Undergraduate certificates are available only to students who are enrolled in an undergraduate degree program or who have successfully completed an undergraduate degree and enroll in a post-baccalaureate (non-degree) for admission to a certificate curriculum. The minimum Graduate School requirements for admission to post-baccalaureate status apply.

Undergraduate Certificates shall be approved by the same process as are programs (see Senate Rule 3.2.0) except that the following are not required: a) a statement of administrative feasibility; b) posting and approval by the Council on Post-Secondary Education, and c) approval by the University of Kentucky Board of Trustees.

An undergraduate certificate must be a minimum of 12 credits, all at the 200 level or above, with a minimum of six credits at the 300-level or above. The certificate must have a three-credit breadth component, requiring the student to take courses in at least two disciplines, with a minimum of three credits to be completed in a second discipline.

A student must earn a C or better in each required certificate course to receive the certificate.

No more than nine credits taken for a certificate can be used to satisfy the requirements for the student's bachelor's degree, a minor, or another certificate, exclusive of free or unrestricted electives.

Award of an undergraduate certificate shall be noted on the student's transcript upon successful completion of the curriculum.

4.2.8 GRADUATE CERTIFICATES [US: 1/14/02]

Students who already are or will be enrolled in a graduate degree program, or those who

apply for or are enrolled in post-baccalaureate (non-degree) status are eligible for admission to a certificate curriculum. The minimum Graduate School requirements for admission to post-baccalaureate status apply. With the approval of the Dean of the Graduate School, the certificate curriculum may set reasonable admission requirements or restrictions beyond those specified by the Graduate School.

Graduate certificates shall be approved by the same process as are programs (see Senate Rule 3.2.0) except that the following are not required: a) approval by the Graduate faculty, b) a statement of administrative feasibility; c) posting and approval by the Council on Post-Secondary Education, and d) approval by the University of Kentucky Board of Trustees.

A graduate certificate must be a minimum of nine graduate credits in length, and should be fewer than 18 graduate credits.

A student must achieve a minimum graduate grade point average of 3.00 in the set of courses required for the graduate certificate in order to be granted the certificate.

Award of a graduate certificate shall be noted on the student's transcript, upon the recommendation of the Dean of the Graduate School.

Graduate certificate curricula must comply with the "Guidelines for Graduate Certificate Curricula" published by the Graduate School.

Proposed definitions for Minors and UG Certificates

Definition of a Minor at UK

A minor is a secondary concentration of courses, typically 18 to 21 credit hours, in a selected discipline area allowing the student to develop expertise or pursue an interest in a subject area outside of their major. The minor may be a subset of a major, or may be a stand-alone program in a disciplinary area (e.g., Appalachian Studies, Environmental Studies, Sustainable Agriculture, to name a few).

Definition of an Undergraduate Certificate at UK

(From Paragraph one of the UG Certificate proposal)

An Undergraduate Certificate is an integrated group of courses (as defined here 12 or more credits) that are 1) cross-disciplinary, but with a thematic consistency, and 2) form a distinctive complement to a student's major and degree program, or 3) leads to the acquisition of a defined set of skills or expertise that will enhance the success of the student upon graduation. Undergraduate Certificates meet a clearly defined educational need of a constituency group, such as continuing education or accreditation for a particular profession; provide a basic competency in an emerging area within a discipline or across disciplines; or respond to a specific state mandate.