Title: Academic and Professional Certificate Programs	Policy No: 3.16
Category: Academic Administrative Processes	Effective Date: Fall 2012; Revisions effective: Fall 2014; Fall 2015

Policy Statement: Certificate programs bring together a related series of courses and requirements into a coherent body of study within a discipline or set of related disciplines. Certificate programs allow students and professionals to focus on areas of expertise or specialties that are either not offered by regular degree programs or represent narrow components within current degree programs. Courses that contribute to certificate programs are purposefully sequenced to provide comprehensive study of a particular subject area. All certificate programs at UCO must fit into one of the university's recognized types of certificate programs. These are outlined below. All certificate programs at UCO must be assessed annually by the academic or support unit that sponsors it.

The Regional University System of Oklahoma (RUSO) and the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education (OSRHE) must approve all Academic Certificate (AC) programs prior to the certificate being offered. In addition, the US Department of Education must approve all new Title IV eligible (financial aid funding) certificate programs prior to the certificate being offered. All departments, colleges, and divisions of the university that wish to offer an AC must seek approval from the Provost.

The Higher Learning Commission must <u>separately</u> approve all new Title IV eligible (financial aid funding) certificate programs containing credit bearing courses that are not substantially related to or derived from existing programs. If 50% or more of the credit bearing courses in a certificate program are developed for that certificate program and are not derived from courses in existing certificate or degree programs, then the university is required to obtain approval of the new certificate by the Higher Learning Commission prior to the certificate being offered. This approval must be obtained prior to marketing the program or matriculating students into the program. See the following link for more information on certificate programs:

 https://www.ncahlc.org/Monitoring/institutional-change.html .

Departments, colleges, and divisions of the university that wish to offer Professional Certificates (PC) must gain approval from the Provost prior to the certificate being offered. Professional Certificates will be managed through the Center for eLearning and Customized Education (CeCE).

This policy does not affect course sequences that are developed to support external certifications, e.g., professional licensure, unless a UCO certificate program is approved.

Related Procedures:
Academic Certificate (AC) Programs (transcripted), Undergraduate and Graduate. Academic Certificate (AC) programs are transcripted academic programs that are comprised of credit bearing courses and related discipline specific requirements. AC programs may be offered at either the undergraduate or graduate levels.

Policy revision dated July 17, 2015   The University of Central Oklahoma
Supercedes all previous policy revisions

Undergraduate Academic Certificate

- New Academic Certificate programs and courses created for these programs are submitted, reviewed, and approved through procedures established by the Academic Affairs Curriculum Council (AACC) in the same manner as other academic programs.
- Undergraduate Academic Certificates must consist of a minimum of 30 credit hours and contain all required courses, prerequisites and other requirements.
- Courses applied toward an AC program may also be applied toward a bachelor's degree or minor as long as they are consistent with the requirements of those degrees. Courses applied toward one certificate program, however, may not be applied toward a second certificate program.
- At least 50% of the total hours of any AC must be completed in residence at UCO.
- Only courses completed with a passing grade may be used to fulfill the requirements of an AC program. A minimum 2.0 GPA will be required to earn an undergraduate AC. Individual AC programs may establish more rigorous grade requirements, which must be clearly stated in the program proposal and in the UCO catalog.
- Catalog applicability and timelines (i.e. discontinued major and catalog applicability) to complete the AC program are the same as for baccalaureate degrees as stated in the undergraduate catalog.

Minimum expectations for any additional discipline specific requirements, such as the successful completion of a project or licensure exam, must be clearly stated in the AC program proposal and in the UCO undergraduate catalog.

Graduate Academic Certificate

- New Academic Certificate Programs and courses created for these programs are submitted, reviewed, and approved through procedures established by the Graduate Council (GC) in the same manner as other academic programs.
- Courses applied toward an AC program may be applied toward a master's degree as long as they are consistent with the requirements of those degrees. Courses applied toward one certificate program, however, may not be applied toward a second certificate program.
- At least 50% of the total hours of any AC must be completed in residence at UCO.
- Graduate Certificates must consist of a minimum of 12 credit hours.
- Students may apply no grade below a "C" and no more than one grade of "C" to a certificate.
- Catalog applicability and timelines (i.e. discontinued major and catalog applicability) to complete the AC program are the same as for graduate degrees as stated in the graduate catalog.
- Minimum expectations for any additional discipline specific requirements, such as the successful completion of a project or licensure exam, must be clearly stated in the AC program proposal and in the UCO graduate catalog.

Professional Certificate (PC) Programs (non-transcripted). Professional Certificates (PCs) are customized education programs and are not recognized on the UCO transcript. PCs are comprised of pre-approved, noncredit and/or credit bearing courses and may meet related

professional requirements. PC programs are managed through the Center for eLearning and Customized Education (CeCE).

- Undergraduate PCs greater than nine (9) credit hours will require students to be officially admitted to UCO prior to beginning the program.
- Credit bearing courses included in any PC program are graded in accordance with university guidelines, posted to the UCO transcript, and may apply toward a bachelor's degree, master's degree, or minor as long as they are consistent with the requirements of those degrees at UCO.
- PC programs are not eligible for Title IV student financial aid.
- The Provost must authorize all PC programs to complete the approval process.
- PCs utilizing resources from a department/school, college, or division must be vetted through the appropriate department chair/school director and dean or division head.
- Forms and procedures for requesting approval of a PC program will be maintained by CeCE. Program requests must be submitted to CeCE at least 90 business days prior to the anticipated start of the program and must be approved prior to the actual start date of the PC program.
- CeCE is responsible for ensuring that the quality of the educational experience is of high caliber and reflects the mission of the institution.
- PC programs may be offered at any time of the year and for any duration that meets the needs of the PC program as authorized by CeCE.
- At least 50% of a PC program must be completed in residence at UCO as determined by CeCE.
- Some PCs may award professional continuing education units.
- CeCE will maintain records for student progress toward and will verify completion of PCs.
- CeCE is vested with sole authority and exclusive right on behalf of the University of Central Oklahoma to issue documents bearing the title "Professional Certificate" or bearing the appearance of an official certificate related to each approved PC program.

Purpose: To bring consistency to the process of implementing certificate programs.

Implementation Date: Fall 2012; Revised Fall 2014; Revised Fall 2015

Coordinating Offices: Center for e-Learning and Customized Education, Office of Academic Affairs

Academic Affairs Point of Contact: Office of the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs

Policy revision approved by the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs on July 20, 2015.
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Policy approved by the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs on June 1, 2012

Key Words: Certificates