

## Graduate Faculty Council Document No. 877, Approved 2/18/02

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

### Background

In response to growing interest among faculty and students, the Graduate Curriculum Committee (GCC) commenced a comprehensive study of graduate certificate programs in 1999. Over the past three years, the GCC studied the current graduate certificate program array at UWM and reviewed national data and best practice standards as developed and disseminated by the Council of Graduate Schools. Two broad principles emerged from the GCC's deliberation: (1) Graduate certificate programs should be codified in ways that parallel the codification of graduate degree programs, and (2) Any policy development in this area should respect the diversity of structures and requirements evident among the twenty already existing graduate certificate programs. Thus, in this document the GCC proposes outlines for the approval, modification, and review of certificate programs, offers guidelines for curriculum and governance structures, and suggests standards for admission, continuation, and completion of certificate programs. In addition, this document offers a range of possible models for certificate programs and will not require currently approved programs to alter basic parameters (i.e., credit requirements) in order to comply with these new guidelines. Representatives of graduate certificate programs were extremely helpful in providing input into the GCC discussions. The GCC solicited feedback on this document from department chairs and graduate program representatives in November, 2001 and discussed all suggestions before forwarding it to the Graduate Faculty Council.

### Definition

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.

Graduate certificates are designed for students at the following levels:

*Post-Baccalaureate* - For students who have completed a bachelor's degree, are enrolled for graduate credit, but are not enrolled simultaneously in a graduate degree program.

*Graduate* - For students who are enrolled simultaneously in a graduate degree program.

*Post-Graduate* - For students who have completed a master's or doctoral degree, are enrolled for graduate credit, but are not enrolled simultaneously in a graduate degree program.

A certificate also may be designed for students across two or more levels.

### Curriculum

The curriculum should be organized into a structured progression of required courses. 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. For graduate and post-graduate certificates, at least 50% of the courses should be 700-level or higher. An integrating course or other capstone experience is recommended.

## **Administration**

An advisory board is recommended for program administration and assessment. Any member who does not hold graduate faculty status shall be excluded from decisions involving student matriculation and continuation and from certifying completion of the certificate.

At a minimum, a program director or coordinator must be designated. The Graduate School recognizes this individual as the signature authority for admission and dismissal from the certificate program, approval of transfer credit, and verification of certificate completion.

## **Instructors**

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

## **Program Authorization**

Requests for new graduate certificate programs must be forwarded to the Graduate School by the dean of the sponsoring school(s) or college(s). These requests will follow the Format for a Graduate Certificate Program Proposal (see below) and must be authorized as indicated on the current Academic Approval Matrix.

## **Program Reauthorization**

Certificate programs are approved for 5-year periods. The GFC must authorize program continuation following the quinquennial evaluation. Students who are currently enrolled in a certificate program that is not reauthorized may complete the program, subject to course availability.

## **Program Evaluation**

Certificate programs will be reviewed every five years. The following information for the period since the last review will be supplied:

- Number of students enrolled in the certificate program
- Number of students who have completed the certificate program
- Course numbers, titles, instructors, and semester(s) in which certificate courses were offered
- If there are administrative or advisory committees for the certificate, a membership list and dates of committee meetings.

Based on this information and an interview with the certificate program director, a member of the Committee on Reviews will assess the program and present his or her findings to the COR. The COR will make a recommendation regarding continuation of the program to the GFC.

## **Admission**

Applicants must possess a baccalaureate degree. It is recommended that applicants have a minimum 2.75 cumulative undergraduate grade point average.

Applicants must declare their intent to pursue a certificate program before completion of six credits in the certificate sequence. An application or declaration of intent must be filed with the certificate program administrative office and a copy of the form must be sent to the Graduate School, confirming a student's admission to the certificate program. Those not already admitted to the Graduate School must file an application with Graduate Student Services.

must file an application with Graduate Student Services.

### **Transfer Credit**

Increased enrollment is one of the potential benefits for the institution in offering a certificate program. Therefore, 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. No transfer is allowed for post-master.s certificates.

### **Articulation with Degree Programs**

Post-baccalaureate certificate Students may count credits toward a UWM post-baccalaureate certificate and a UWM graduate degree, subject to Graduate School transfer policy.

Graduate certificate No more than 50% of the credits required for a certificate may count toward meeting degree requirements.

Post-master's certificate Credits applied toward a UWM graduate degree may not count toward a post-master's certificate.

Certificates and concentrations Students may not earn a certificate and a concentration in the same area.

### **Grade Point Average Requirement**

A minimum cumulative 3.00 grade point average in certificate courses taken at UWM is required.

### **Verification of Certificate Completion**

For each student who completes the certificate program, the certificate program director will sign and send to the Graduate School a form listing 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.

### **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 certificates that are designed as add-ons to degree programs, and are awarded concurrent with the degree, the time limit shall be the same as that of the degree program.

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

Administrators of certificate programs that were approved by the GFC, the Graduate School, and the Provost prior to Semester I, 2002-03 may request exemption from specific regulations contained herein, with the exception of the required GFC review and reauthorization. However, COR reviewers may recommend changes to existing certificate programs to bring them into alignment with these regulations.

## **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 Equivalents(s) Sponsoring the Certificate**
- 1.3 **College(s), School(s), or Functional Equivalent(s)**
- 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:

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 Define the level of the program:
  - Post-Baccalaureate* - For students who have completed a bachelor's degree, are enrolled for graduate credit, but are not enrolled simultaneously in a graduate degree program.
  - Graduate* - For students who are enrolled simultaneously in a graduate degree program.
  - Post-Graduate* - For students who have completed a master's or doctoral degree, are enrolled for graduate credit, but are not enrolled simultaneously in a graduate degree program.

A certificate may also be designed for students across two or more levels.

- 5.1.4 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.

5.1.5 Discuss any anticipated alternative instructional models.

*Please consider the level of the program in responding to items 5.2 - 5.6 below*

- 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 Continuation and exit requirements:** State minimum grades required in specific courses, if any, and cumulative G.P.A. required in certificate courses. If less than the maximum allowed for certificates, indicate length of time allowed to complete the requirements for the certificate.
- 5.5 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.
- 5.6 Certificate conferral:** State whether certificate will be awarded upon completion of certificate courses or concurrently with completion of degree program. The person responsible for the certificate program administration must inform the Graduate School when a student has completed the certificate program and provide a program of study for each student certifying that the courses meet the certificate requirements.
- 5.7 Program Administration:** State position title of person responsible for certificate program (e.g. Director, Coordinator) and name of any committee responsible for curricular development and review, student advising, etc. Describe how this committee 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* in print and electronic format.