

Design Criteria for Certificates

Definition of a Certificate. "An undergraduate certificate may have an occupational outcome or address a focused area of study." [*Chancellor's Procedures, Academic Programs, Procedure 3.36.1* Adopted August 2007]

In addition to an occupational outcome, chancellor's procedures adopted in August 2007 allow for creation of certificates with a "focused area of study." The design of a certificate must be coherent, with explicit outcomes identified. The criteria below have been developed to clarify and interpret the purposes of a certificate.

A certificate program is designed to:

- Prepare individuals for employment, licensure or certification in an occupation (e.g., Carpentry Assistant, Wound Care Nurse, Microsoft Network Communication),
- Provide specialized, in-depth or advanced knowledge or skills in a focused area of study such as a discipline, field of study, profession, or occupation (e.g., American Indian Studies, American Sign Language, Advanced Collision Services, Supervisory Leadership)

A certificate program may not be primarily designed to:

- Explore careers,
- Introduce a discipline, field of study, occupation or industry,
- Meet general education requirements,
- Qualify graduates for entry into another program,
- Prepare individuals for entry into a baccalaureate or post-baccalaureate professional program, or
- Allow students to qualify for financial aid.

A certificate may include restricted electives, e.g., a choice between two or three courses related to the certificate's outcomes. A certificate may not include general electives.

An individualized studies certificate is not permitted.

If the title of a certificate includes such words as basic, careers, concepts, core, foundations, fundamentals, general, introduction, individualized, orientation, or pre-XXX, it will be reviewed by the office of the chancellor to determine if either the proposed certificate is appropriate or another program name would be more appropriate. A certificate title may include the word advanced.

These guidelines allow for certificates at a range of levels without creating a special category of "advanced certificates". Admission requirements to some certificates may include an expectation of previous knowledge or skill, a previous award, work experience or its equivalent. Requirements for entrance into certificates must be outlined in catalog copy to ensure the likelihood of student success. *Example:* Individuals working in the computer field might need to upgrade programming skills or explore new areas of knowledge such as computer security. The expectation can be that these individuals will have extensive prior experience, equivalent knowledge and/or have completed a previous award to successfully complete the certificate.