

Policies and Procedures for Graduate Certificate Programs

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Definitions

A graduate certificate program is a focused collection of courses that, when completed, affords the student some record of coherent academic accomplishment in a given discipline or set of related disciplines. It is not a degree.

Guidelines

1. Students are awarded a graduate certificate upon completion of a well-defined program of course work within an approved graduate program.
2. The didactic material encompassed within a graduate certificate program may represent a subset or extension of an existing graduate discipline.
3. For a graduate certificate program, the number of graduate credits is expected to range between 12 and 18 credits. The number of credits must be appropriate to the learning objectives and focus of the program.
4. Graduate certificate programs may be a post-baccalaureate or post-master's level. Post – master's graduate certificate programs must be designed as such.
5. Graduate certificate program do not include a thesis.
6. All graduate certificate programs will be reviewed within the course of regular graduate program assessment and review.
7. Certificate programs also may be proposed for post-baccalaureate students that consist of undergraduate credit courses, professional credit courses, or noncredit courses; in such cases, the program will not be considered to have met the standard for graduate certificate programs.
8. With the exception of courses offered in collaboration with another institution or expressly addressed in the certificate program requirements, a majority of credits for the certificate program must be completed at West Chester University. Graduate credits from another accredited institution maybe accepted for transfer and are subject to the transfer of credit policy in place with approval of the department and the dean of graduate studies and extended education.

9. Students pursuing a graduate certificate will be required to meet the same admissions and academic requirements as those defined for degree-seeking students (e.g., maintenance of 3.0 GPA).
10. The title of any graduate certificate program must contain the words “Graduate Certificate Program”. Only Pennsylvania Department of Education certification programs may include the word “certification”.
11. While the courses in a graduate certificate program may be used as evidence in support of a student’s application for admission to a graduate degree program, the certificate itself is not considered a prerequisite, nor is it a guarantee of admission.