

**Policy and Procedures for Academic Certificates
(8/AS/02/UEPC)**

Overview/Definition

Course-Based Academic Certificates

Course-based academic certificate programs must be initiated and offered by an instructional unit(s) and ordinarily consists of degree credit course work. Students must be eligible for regular admission at the level of the certificate program. The certificate program objective must be different from existing campus degree majors and minors. The required course work is designed to provide expertise in a defined area of study and is not intended to offer a broad perspective of a discipline. The aim is for the student to acquire particular competence or skills common to vocational or professional fields.

Competency-Based Academic Certificates

Competency-based academic certificate programs are a variant of the academic certificate programs that traditionally consist of degree credit course work. As opposed to course-based academic certificate programs, which *develop* skills and knowledge, competency-based programs afford students the opportunity to *demonstrate* mastery of skills and knowledge learned both from courses of study and from life and work experiences. Award of the competency certificate is based solely on demonstration of identified skills and knowledge at predetermined levels of performance. In some cases, additional course work or experience may assist a student who fails to meet established standards. However, course work cannot be offered in lieu of demonstrated skill mastery. Validation of competency does not result in course credit, although establishing a special course for students who are going through a complex competency assessment program is not prohibited.

Integrated Academic Certificates

Academic certificate programs may combine elements of course work and demonstrated competencies as essential to program design and to the achievement of the academic learning objectives. This integrated approach to the award of a certificate follows the proposal format for both course- and competency-based certificates. Award of the integrated academic certificate is based on the student's acquisition of a particular competence or skill and the student's demonstration of specified skills and knowledge related to the program's objectives. Proposals based on the integrated model must provide a clear rationale justifying the use of this design and address all relevant requirements stated in the proposal formats. Both dimensions of the program's structure must be clearly delineated in the proposal. Proposals must indicate how specific learning objectives are tied to either the course-based dimension or the competency-based dimension.

Competency Standards

Evidence of competency includes clear demonstration of specific skills and knowledge at levels of performance that are predetermined, approved, and available to students in writing. Performance is assessed by trained and appointed faculty on the basis of an identified body of evidence.

Normally, the certificate coordinator provides guidance to students at the earliest possible time in their academic careers to facilitate preparation for meeting competency standards. However, a regularly-enrolled student of CSU Stanislaus has the option of demonstrating competency apart from participation in any academic program that may be identified as preparatory to the certificate. If an assessor determines that evidence of competency is weak or insufficient, the assessor assists the student in developing a plan for skill mastery.

Institutional Approval Steps for New Certificate Programs

1. The department or academic unit curriculum committee and chair.
2. Undergraduate proposals to college dean(s) and the University Educational Policies Committee; graduate proposals to the college dean, Graduate Council, and graduate dean.
3. Undergraduate and graduate proposals to the Academic Senate for recommendation to the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs and the President.

Proposal Format for New Course-Based Academic Certificate Programs

1. Title of certificate
2. Individual(s) and academic unit(s) making the request
3. Purpose of the certificate
4. Learning objectives/outcomes
5. Justification for the certificate
6. Assurance the program does not duplicate an existing degree program (major or minor)
7. Expected number of participants
8. Admission criteria and procedures
9. Time requirements, time restrictions, or other conditions (if any) for award of certificate
10. Resource needs for initiation and continuation (faculty, staff, library, technology, facilities, etc.)
11. Courses and course descriptions (new and existing)

Proposal Format for New Competency-Based and Integrated Academic Certificate Programs

1. Title of certificate
2. Individual(s) and academic unit(s) making the request
3. Purpose of the certificate
4. Learning objectives/outcomes
5. Justification for the certificate
6. Assurance the program does not duplicate an existing degree program (major or minor)
7. Expected number of participants
8. Admission criteria and procedures
9. Time requirements, time restrictions, or other conditions (if any) for award of certificate
10. Resource needs for initiation and continuation (faculty, staff, library, technology, facilities, etc.)
11. Criteria/standards used to demonstrate student competency (national organizations, professional accrediting bodies, disciplinary standards, etc.)
12. Methods for assessing student competency (reliability and validity of methods; security of assessment, etc.)
13. Qualifications of assessors
14. Training and evaluation of assessors

Certificate Format

The certificate shall have a common format. The Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, in consultation with the college deans, shall determine the format and award the certificate upon the recommendation of the administrator responsible for the certificate.

Administrative Responsibility and Review

The appropriate department chair or academic unit administrator shall be responsible for program administration.

The program will be reviewed on the normal periodic seven-year schedule.

Termination of the certificate, other than as a result of the seven-year program review cycle, shall follow university policy for "Program Discontinuance."