

Policy Name: Clemson University Policy on Certificates

Policy Statement:

Clemson University aligns with the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education (CHE) in defining a Certificate as a stand-alone organized series of courses offered to eligible students or working professionals, which results in the award of a credential by Clemson University. Academic departments/units proposing a Certificate program must clearly identify the need for the certificate and the intended target population (i.e. undergraduate students, graduate students, or working professionals), establish the credit hour limits and eligibility criteria for admission to the program, and seek approval for the program and all courses. All certificates are subject to approval through the official University shared governance processes for course and program approvals. The Clemson University's minimum credit-hour requirement for a certificate is nine (9) semester credit hours, as defined by the Clemson University Credit Hour and Credit Load Policies. Professional certification programs administered through Clemson University by external professional organizations or agencies are not subject to the minimum credit-hour requirement.

Types of Certificates

Clemson University approves and awards four (4) types of certificate credentials intended for three broad populations: undergraduate students, graduate students, and working professionals.

(1) The Undergraduate Certificate, also known as Baccalaureate Certificate or simply Certificate, seeks either to: enhance the undergraduate degree or equivalent by bringing focus on a set of skills or competencies not otherwise attainable through the certificate seeker's major or minor, or provide a set of skills or competencies to non-degree-seeking students. Non-degree-seeking students who do not yet hold the bachelor's degree or equivalent are thus eligible to pursue the Baccalaureate Certificate.

(2) The Post-Baccalaureate Certificate is a graduate certificate designed to address specific needs of holders of the bachelor's degree or equivalent, and seeks to bring focus on a set of skills or competencies not otherwise attainable through the certificate seeker's standard academic preparation.

(3) The Post-Master's Certificate is a graduate certificate designed with holders of the Master's degree or equivalent in mind, and seeks to bring focus on a set of skills or competencies not otherwise attainable through the certificate seeker's standard academic preparation.

(4) The Professional Development Certificate (which has also occasionally been called simply "Certificate" in the past) is designed to meet the professional development needs of working professionals or lifelong learners, and is customized to respond adequately to the certificate seeker's identified needs, which cannot otherwise be fulfilled through the workplace or prior educational preparation.

Effective from the date of approval of this policy, **proposals are required to clearly select and affirmatively identify a certificate type.** The faculty shared governance processes for approving programs and courses shall return for correction any proposals to create a new program labeled simply as "Certificate," which does not clearly identify such certificate as belonging in one of the four certificate types described herein.

To be an official Clemson University credential, the certificate program and associated courses must be approved through the official University shared governance processes for course and program approval, including approvals by department-level, college-level, and university-level curriculum committees and any other appropriate bodies, internal or external to Clemson University.

Approval Authority

The Division of Undergraduate Studies and the shared governance processes pertaining to the approval of courses and programs at the undergraduate level govern the approval of

Undergraduate Certificate programs. It is also responsible for approving all undergraduate courses used in a Professional Development Certificate. The Division of Undergraduate Studies and the shared governance processes pertaining to the approval of courses and programs at the undergraduate level shall also govern the approval of Professional Development Certificates that require that at least fifty-one percent (51%) of the cumulative number of credit hours of courses be at the undergraduate level.

The Graduate School and the shared governance processes for approving courses and programs at the graduate level govern the approval of the Post-Baccalaureate and Post-Master's graduate certificate programs. It is also responsible for approving all graduate courses used in a Professional Development Certificate. The Graduate School and the shared governance processes pertaining to the approval of courses and programs at the graduate level shall also govern the approval of Professional Development Certificates that require that at least 51% of the cumulative number of credit hours of courses be at the graduate level.

The Division of Undergraduate Studies and the Graduate School may establish more specific policies and policy procedures on Certificates that align with this policy.

Course Catalog Entry Conventions for Certificates

The Clemson University Office of the Registrar shall identify in the course catalogs each certificate type by the corresponding five-letter program code as follows:

Undergraduate Certificate = CERTU
Professional Development Certificate = CERTP
Post-Baccalaureate Certificate = CERTB
Post-Masters Certificate = CERTM

Both the Undergraduate course catalog and the Graduate course catalog shall publish information on all certificates and clearly identify them by type for ease of access.

Definition and Clarification

Certificate vs. Minor

The term academic "Minor" denotes a series of courses, typically at least 15 credit hours, related by discipline and focus outside the major, which students declare optionally or as a required complement to the major. The official Clemson University statement on minors is as follows:

"A minor consists of at least 15 semester hours, with no fewer than nine credits at the 3000 level or higher.* A student cannot major and minor in the same field or acquire a minor that is not allowed by the degree program. In programs that require a minor, courses may not be used to fulfill both the major and minor requirements. Only courses that are outside the major's subject code may be used to fulfill minor requirements in programs where a minor is required. Regardless of whether a minor, concentration, or emphasis area is required, courses may not be used to fulfill a second minor, concentration, or emphasis area. Even though a course may satisfy two requirements, the credits will only count once toward total hours. Students are encouraged to contact the department offering the minor for advising. Specific requirements are detailed below.

**Nine credits at the 3000 or 4000 level are not required for a minor in Art, as approved by the University Undergraduate Curriculum Committee 2010."*

Source: (<http://catalog.clemson.edu/content.php?catoid=16&navoid=481>)

The certificate is a standalone credential, whereas the minor is always complementary to a degree major. Approval is required for certificates by the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education, but no approval is required for minors by CHE. To highlight the complementary nature of the minor relative to the major, the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education stipulates that coding for the minor cannot be from the same six-digit CIP Code as the major. This Clemson University Policy on Certificates, as well as the official statement on Minors, align with the CHE stipulation.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide a Clemson University definition of Certificate aligned with the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education. It differentiates the certificate from the degree minor, and identifies the types of certificates that Clemson University awards. Finally, it establishes clear guidelines on which shared governance processes pertaining to the approval of courses and programs must govern the approval of each type of certificate. This policy guides the design and administration of Certificates, lifts any confusion between a Certificate and a Minor, and offers to potential certificate-seeking students a better understanding of which certificate type to pursue.

Responsible Department/Division (Contact Person):

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Approval Dates:

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