

Undergraduate Certificates at the University of Kentucky

An Undergraduate Certificate is an integrated group of courses (as defined here 12 or more credits) that are 1) cross-disciplinary, but with a thematic consistency, and 2) form a distinctive complement to a student's major and degree program, or 3) leads to the acquisition of a defined set of skills or expertise that will enhance the success of the student upon graduation. Undergraduate Certificates meet a clearly defined educational need of a constituency group, such as continuing education or accreditation for a particular profession; provide a basic competency in an emerging area within a discipline or across disciplines; or respond to a specific state mandate.

Undergraduate Certificates are becoming an increasingly important component of the total range of educational opportunities offered by a modern, comprehensive research university. Certificates provide the opportunity for students to pursue a topic that complements their undergraduate degree program or the opportunity to explore outside the range of their undergraduate degree.

Why do we need Undergraduate Certificates?

Undergraduate Certificates can serve several important purposes for our programs and students. Undergraduate Certificates will provide:

- **The ability to respond to emerging and cutting edge fields:** Certificates provide a way to make new, innovative programs emergent: Arts and Sciences plans to offer certificates in newly forming areas so students can show competence in response to contextual emerging changes in their respective fields. To successfully do this, flexibility would be key, such as not requiring certificates to be interdisciplinary. However, some topics will require that interdisciplinary approaches be utilized
- **The ability to certify specializations:** Assist students in developing competency in areas of specialization where there is no major or degree program.
- **Potential motivation for innovative course development:** Faculty could be motivated to explore new areas, address emerging needs, or build niche specialties.
- **Flexibility to address universal needs:** Certificates allow for responsiveness to emerging needs and contextual changes and are more flexible than a minor. There are many areas on campus that have experiences that do not fit 'traditional' academic models such as creative arts projects, theatre experiences, architectural projects, and international study (intellectual learning paired with international experience).
- **An enhancement for recruitment to UK or to a College:** Certificates would provide another tool for attracting higher quality students to whom innovative certificates appeal (therefore the need for flexibility within the certificate to be able to respond to the context and needs of each major and area of study to be cutting edge).
- **An enrichment and retention opportunity:** Certificates may also be used to polish and help retain students following recruitment. Examples: Global Scholars (B & E) was created in

response to complaints of employers- it is an enrichment program (it builds professionalism vs. specific content only). It is much like an honors track in business; high achieving freshmen join as a cohort and engage early with the college enhancing. This also enhances retention with is important due to B& E's selective admission's requirement. Another program offered along with Engineering- SEAM (2nd semester)- is tied into a living learning community and is also meant to be an honors-like track. The Global Scholars program will be connected with a living learning community next year, further enhancing its potential for engaging students.

Proposed Requirements for an Undergraduate Certificate:

- A minimum of 12 credits of course work taken for a letter grade.
- At least 12 credits must be 200 level or above, and a minimum of 6 credits must be at the 300-level or above.
- The student must complete a three-credit breadth component. The breadth component requires that a student take courses in at least two disciplines, with a minimum of three credits to be completed in a second discipline.
- Student must earn a C or better in each required certificate course to receive the certificate.
- Certificates will only be awarded to students who successfully complete a degree, or have completed a four-year degree.
- No more than nine credits taken for a certificate can be used to satisfy the requirements for the student's bachelor's degree, a minor, or another certificate, exclusive of free or
- unrestricted electives.

Administrative and Academic Structure:

- There must be a designated Faculty Director for each certificate. The Director shall represent the curriculum and any affiliated faculty in multidisciplinary certificates.
- Minimum admission requirements for a certificate will be that students must be in good academic standing and can enter at any time in their undergraduate career. However, the faculty offering the certificate can impose additional requirements for a certificate.
- Courses taken prior to admission to the certificate can be used in the certificate.
- The Director approves the individual certificate curriculum for each student and informs the Registrar when the certificate is complete and may be awarded.
- The awarded certificate is to be posted on the student's official transcript.
- The certificate will not appear on the diploma. Programs may award a paper certificate, to be signed by the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education or the appropriate designee (e.g., a College Dean) and the Certificate Director.
- All certificate proposals must be developed in consultation with faculty in contributing or affected academic units. The proposal must be approved through the faculty curriculum

committee of the college or colleges participating in the certificate, and then submitted to Undergraduate Council. Certificates approved by UC will then be forwarded to University Senate for final approval.

- An undergraduate certificate curriculum shall be approved or re-approved for operation for a period of 6 years (or a lesser period if requested). Toward the end of the 5th year of its duration, the certificate Director shall prepare a report summarizing its status, operations, and certificate awardees during that period of time, and indicating its prospects for the future if renewal of the certificate curriculum is sought. The report will be provided to participating college Deans and to the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education. If a certificate is suspended or terminated, students currently enrolled in the curriculum shall have a reasonable period of time, not to exceed three years, to complete the requirements for the certificate.