

Graduate Certificate Program
Approved by FC May 6, 2014
Colorado State University

1. Graduate Certificate Program Policy

- a. Graduate Certificates history/future context
 - i. Colorado Department of Higher Education has indicated that CSU's statutory role and mission permits it to offer "Graduate Certificates" for a series of graduate courses taken by post-baccalaureate students.
 - i. HLC requires that all CSU credit-based credentials are approved through the curricular process.
 - ii. Only the University, as an institution, will officially award Graduate Certificates. All certificates will be titled and recorded as "Graduate Certificate in (name of certificate program)" on the transcript upon completion of the Graduate Certificate requirements.
 - iii. Only Graduate Certificates approved through the curricular process can be advertised and awarded. No unit on campus shall advertise Graduate Certificates not approved through the curricular process.
 - iv. With the creation of transcribed credit bearing Graduate Certificates, certificates of completion for credit bearing courses will cease to exist; however, students enrolled in such programs will be allowed to complete their programs. Certificates of Completion for non-credit bearing courses may continue.
- b. Principles
 - i. General
 - 1. Students must have proof of an official undergraduate baccalaureate or equivalent degree to enroll in a Graduate Certificate program.
 - 2. Matriculated/graduate degree seeking students and guest/non-degree seeking graduate students (guests) may participate in Graduate Certificate programs.
 - 3. Graduate courses must be taken at CSU and specifically identified as fulfilling requirements for the Graduate Certificates. Courses may not be transferred in from another institution as part of a Graduate Certificate. There will be no course waivers or substitutions to meet certification requirements.
 - 4. Graduate Certificates must be completed within 10 years. Courses to be applied toward fulfilling the requirements for a Graduate Certificate must

- have been registered for and completed within the 10 years immediately preceding the date of completion of requirements for the certificate.
5. For conferral purposes, a student's GPA for the cumulative Graduate Certificate coursework must be a minimum of 3.0.
 - a. Students must earn a minimum of a "C" in all certificate work.
 - b. Students may not take a course more than twice during the certificate process in order to enhance their grade for the course or GPA for the overall certificate.
 6. Graduate courses completed as an undergraduate may not be applied toward a Graduate Certificate per CDHE's ruling.
- ii. Degree seeking/matriculated students
1. Will be eligible for a transcribed Graduate Certificate whether the certificate credits are offered within the required coursework or outside of it.
 2. If a second or subsequent Graduate Certificate is earned, it must be earned with credits beyond those required in the first Graduate Certificate.
 - a. No graduate courses can be counted toward more than one Graduate Certificate.
 - b. The Graduate Certificate coursework may count toward the degree if it meets the curriculum requirements of the degree. Not all Graduate Certificate coursework will meet the requirements for a graduate degree.
- iii. Non-degree seeking (guest) students
1. May apply for admission to a graduate degree program; however,
 - a. successful completion of the course(s) within a Graduate Certificate or the award of a Graduate Certificate does not guarantee admission to a graduate degree program.
 - b. Courses completed as part of a Graduate Certificate may be applied to the degree if the courses meet the degree requirements. Not all Graduate Certificate coursework will meet the requirements for graduate degrees.
 2. If a student chooses to apply to a graduate program after completing a Graduate Certificate, the Graduate Certificate will be indicated as such on the student's transcript. The Graduate Certificate coursework may count toward the degree if it meets the curriculum requirements of the degree, and program and Graduate School approval. Once a student earns a Graduate Certificate s/he will retain it (with the exception of violation of academic integrity or other similar violations) upon matriculation into a graduate program. **Please note:** only graduate coursework with grades of "B" or better included in Graduate Certificates has the potential to be considered as fulfilling the requirements, in part, of a CSU graduate degree.

2. Graduate Certificate standards and development process

a. Standards

- i. 9 graduate credit *minimum*, 15 credit *maximum* in regular (00-79) credit bearing courses at the 500 level or above. Departments proposing a Graduate Certificate with 16 or more credits must provide a compelling reason to the University Curriculum Committee (UCC) to exceed the standard.
 1. Guest students who have completed a Graduate Certificate (GC) that includes more than 9 credits may petition to apply all GC credits (with grades of B or better) into a graduate degree program if the credits meet the curricular requirements of the graduate degree program and the department approves.
- ii. All Graduate Certificate coursework must be traditionally graded.
- iii. The Graduate Certificates must meet the following standards:
 1. Include a coherent academic experience from 9-15 credits that has a stand-alone professional or marketable value.
 2. Denote a knowledge base or skill set from one or more subject codes in an area with intrinsic significance.
 3. Meet recognized criteria for a legitimate educational experience through the CSU curricular review process.
 4. Have a different name than degree programs, specializations, or interdisciplinary studies programs.
- iv. Academic units that wish to convert Graduate Certificates of Completion to meet the criteria of Graduate Certificates must submit a Graduate Certificate proposal through the curricular review process. Current Graduate Certificates of Completion for credit bearing coursework will not be grandmothers; certificates of completion for credit bearing coursework will cease to exist once the Graduate Certificate is approved; however, students enrolled in such program will be permitted to complete their programs.
 1. Each academic unit that offers a Graduate Certificate is responsible for its accurate description
 2. The Graduate School and the requirements of the Graduate and Professional Bulletin policies will apply unless indicated otherwise.
- v. Certificate development process
 1. If requesting resources, the Graduate Certificates request must go through Phase 0, 1, and 2 of the New Program Development Process.
 - a. Upon approval of the COD and Provost, the Graduate Certificates will be referred for consideration to the following bodies: College Curriculum Committee(s) (CCC), CoSRGE, CoSFP, UCC, FC.
 2. To propose a Graduate Certificate that does not require new resources, the steps followed will be identical to the process used to propose a specialization within a graduate degree. As in the specialization process, the Graduate Certificates will be considered by the following bodies: the appropriate College Curriculum Committee(s), CoSRGE, UCC, and FC.

- a. Proposers will be required to include the following information on the designated form:
 - i. Name of Graduate Certificate
 - ii. Name of academic unit proposing
 - iii. Course subject codes, numbers, names, credits, total number of credits proposed for inclusion
 - iv. Rationale for courses to be packaged as a Graduate Certificate. Please address:
 - 1. Target audience
 - 2. Nature of the coherent academic experience that has a stand-alone professional or marketable value
 - 3. Inherent knowledge base or skill set in an area with an intrinsic significance
 - v. Appropriate signatures from:
 - 1. Academic units
 - a. Proposing and those whose courses are included
 - 2. Department head and college curricular committee

3. Student Graduate Certificate application and conferral process

- a. General
 - i. Degree seeking/matriculated and non-degree seeking/guest students must apply and be admitted into a Graduate Certificate program so they can be identified and tracked.
 - 1. Degree seeking students must meet and maintain the conditions required to be enrolled as a graduate student at CSU.
 - 2. Non-degree seeking/guest students are required to have an undergraduate degree. There are no other general admission policy requirements; however, individual programs may impose additional restrictions.
 - i. If students are not continuously enrolled in the certificate program, they must reapply.
 - ii. Graduate Certificates will be conferred on the same dates that degrees are conferred. Refer to the degree conferral policy in the CSU General Catalogue. Conferral only occurs three times each year, after the conclusion of the fall, spring, and summer terms. The conferral date is the date which will be posted on the official transcript
- b. Matriculated/degree-seeking students
 - i. must apply for the Graduate Certificate to be conferred during the semester in which they complete the final credits of the Graduate Certificate or after, as long as they are enrolled at CSU in their degree program. The Graduate Certificate conferral application deadline will be posted on the GS website for each term. Students must be admitted to the Graduate Certificate program and enrolled at CSU the semester they complete the Graduate Certificate. Upon completion of the Graduate Certificate and appropriate forms, it may be transcribed at the next degree conferral date.

- c. Non-degree seeking/guest students
 - i. must apply for Graduate Certificates to be conferred during the semester in which they complete the final coursework of the Graduate Certificates. The Graduate Certificate conferral application deadline will be posted on the GS website for each term. Once a student is no longer enrolled at CSU s/he may no longer apply for or be awarded the Graduate Certificate.

4. Administrative issues

- a. Graduate Certificates will be printed through a process created by the Registrar's Office and Graduate School. No other units, under any circumstances, will be authorized to print Graduate Certificates.
- b. Only academic and special academic units can bring Graduate Certificate proposals forward.
- c. Other issues and requirements:
 - i. An application fee will be required to support program operations.
 - ii. The requirements for any academic program including Graduate Certificates offered by the University must be described accurately and completely in any and all forms of communication with students, prospective students, and the public. This includes both printed and electronic documents, including Web sites, brochures, student handbooks, advising check sheets and the General Catalog. The requirements shall be described accurately and completely as they have been approved by CoSRGE, University Curriculum Committee and Faculty Council. Any program of study that leads to an academic credential conferred by the University is covered by this requirement, including undergraduate and graduate degrees, concentrations, specializations, Graduate Certificates, minors, options, and interdisciplinary studies programs. Department heads and chairs (or the responsible individual for other academic units) are responsible for ensuring that all such communications comply with this policy.