

## DUQUESNE UNIVERSITY

### Certificate Policy & Processes

#### **Definitions & Requirements for Certificates** (Policy, Academic Council, April 2017)

A certificate is a credential that requires completion of an organized program of study at the postsecondary, post-baccalaureate, or post-master's levels. Certificates are generally organized to provide professional development by equipping students with specific knowledge, skills, and proficiencies. Certificates are not the same as minors since minors are academic in focus and certificates are for applied, professional purposes. A minimum grade point average of 3.0 is required for a graduate certificate.

**Postsecondary Certificates** require a minimum of **15** semester hours with a maximum of 3 semester hours accepted in transfer. Generally, Duquesne offers postsecondary certificates only to degree-seeking undergraduate students.

**Post-baccalaureate and post-master's certificates** require a minimum of **15** semester hours with a maximum of **6** semester hours accepted in transfer. Those pursuing certificates must hold an appropriate baccalaureate and/or master's degree as specified by the program.

Some certificate programs may be completed while students are pursuing a degree, and degree-seeking students may be eligible for federal financial aid. **At Duquesne University, a certificate program pursued as a stand-alone credential does not qualify for federal financial aid since students are not degree-seeking.** Certificate-seeking students may apply for other forms of financial aid that may be available to them.

*Processes* (Academic Council, February 2018)

#### **Awarding Certificates:**

Students seeking certificates (or Artist Diploma) must apply for graduation by the deadline as outlined in the Academic Calendar for the anticipated term of completion.

The respective schools and the Office of the University Registrar must clear students for the certificate conferral (graduation).

Upon successful completion of requirements, certificates (paper documents) will be issued for post-baccalaureate and post-master's students. Covers will not be provided.

Students earning post-baccalaureate and post-master's certificates will be listed in the May and December Commencement Programs, and certificates will print on transcripts as earned credentials. It is not anticipated, however, that these students will participate in the May Commencement or Diplomas Ceremonies or the December Commencement.

Undergraduate students who complete requirements for a certificate will receive only the baccalaureate diploma. The post-secondary certificate will be noted on baccalaureate transcripts but paper certificates will not be issued.

**Retroactive limits:** Students who earned a certificate prior to the 2017-2018 academic year may not request issue of a paper certificate. Students who graduated before January 2018 and who met the equivalency of certificate requirements within their degrees may not now request the certificate. Earning a certificate requires prior advising approval and then conferral clearance by the appropriate school.

**Transition:** There have been school-issued certificates that are set at lower credits. Such school-issued certificates may continue or the programs may reevaluate their credit requirements to raise them to 15 so as to qualify for university-issued certificates.

### **Process for establishing a certificate program:**

Duquesne welcomes new certificate programs but requires compelling grounds to offer more of those that must be regulated and reported under the federal Gainful Employment (GE) policy, which notes, “Certificate programs at private, nonprofit and public institutions, and nearly all for-profit degree and certificate programs must prepare students for “gainful employment in a recognized occupation” in order for those students to be eligible for federal student aid” (NAICU 2017). There have been challenges in court, but the rules are still in operation. Therefore:

New DU certificate programs must either:

- Be in conjunction with or embedded in degree programs: i.e. post-secondary certificates earned along with a bachelor’s degree; post-baccalaureate while pursuing a graduate degree or post-master’s while in a second master’s or Ph.D. program.
  - Students are eligible for federal funding because of being in a degree program.
- Or, if independent, stand-alone post-baccalaureate or post-master’s, provide for and state publicly in some fashion the following as appropriate:
  - They are programs that provide course work that may serve as preparation for and a bridge to degree programs or possibly licensure.
  - Up to 15 credits of graduate coursework taken in this non-degree status may count towards a graduate degree at Duquesne subject to the admission requirements of the program.
  - If a student is subsequently admitted to a Duquesne graduate program, graduate courses taken for the certificate and completed with a B or better may be applied as major or elective credits as approved for the degree requirements.
  - Success in such courses and completion of the certificate does not guarantee admission into a graduate degree program or that the courses will automatically count towards graduation.
  - The course load and time requirements for completing certificate.
  - Applicants for post-baccalaureate, post-master’s, post-law, or post-doctoral certificate programs must hold a requisite bachelor’s or graduate degree from

accredited U.S. institutions or a comparable degree from an officially recognized institution in another country.

- Students in non-degree status are not eligible for federal student aid and may want to pursue alternative loans if in need of financial assistance.

Department(s) & School(s) create and approve a proposal/program that includes:

1. Description: Name it and note what kind of certificate and how the program would serve students, academic competencies, and professional requirements. How do the courses and possible non-course curricular requirements (portfolios; internships; etc.) provide a focused exploration of a disciplinary, interdisciplinary, or professional subject? **Provide learning outcomes.**
  - a. Undergraduate-level *post-secondary* certificate: Offered only to degree-seeking undergraduate students and most, if not all, of the required credits are achieved through undergraduate coursework.
  - b. Undergraduate-level *post-baccalaureate* certificate: Over half of the required credits may be achieved through undergraduate coursework.
  - c. Graduate-level *post-baccalaureate* and *post-master's* certificates: The required credits must be achieved through graduate coursework.
2. Prospective and eligible student population: Who and why?
3. Application/Admissions criteria for post-secondary certificates:
  - a. Note whether a student might register for it through advisors as they would for a minor or if there is an additional application or vetting process.
  - b. List or clarify any additional requirements.
4. Application/Admissions criteria for post-baccalaureate certificates:
  - a. Previous education and/or experience as required.
  - b. Transcripts, tests, licenses, letters, etc., as required.
  - c. Transferable credits: type, time, and number limit:
    - i. The transfer of credits from another school or application of credits earned previously at Duquesne must align with the Transfer Credit Policies in the appropriate undergraduate or graduate catalog with the following caveats:
      1. Application of undergraduate or graduate courses depends on certificate level.
      2. Courses must be closely related to the certificate requirements.
    - ii. Transferred/applied credits are valid for six years unless a program indicates a shorter period.
    - iii. Up to **6** credits from another college or university or up to **9** earned previously at Duquesne may be applied to the certificate *unless* a program indicates fewer.
  - d. Extra criteria/limits for students enrolled in a degree-granting program:

- i. Application letter must state how the certificate will add to and/or support the student's graduate program of study and future plans.
  - ii. Graduate program approval.
  - iii. Students must show progress toward both degree and certificate each year, and advisors are to assess their course choices and progress accordingly.
5. Certificate conferral requirements:
  - a. Minimum required total semester and Duquesne in-residence and/or online credit hours: DU requires a minimum of 15 with 9 in residence or online, but a program may require more.
  - b. DU requires at least a 2.0 for postsecondary and a 3.0 QPA for graduate certificates, but a program may establish higher.
  - c. Time allowed for completion: 4 years (with possible modification if tied to a degree program).
6. Credit-sharing with degree programs: DU has no restrictions on sharing certificate credits with a major or minor or Core requirements at the post-secondary (bachelor's) level. At the graduate level generally the maximum is 15 shared credits, but more may be considered depending on degree program requirements.
  - a. Application of AP, CLEP, or special exam credits: Relevant university-approved credits apply to the required total semester and in-residence requirements for post-secondary certificates only.
7. Curriculum: List courses that will support the program. Are all courses within current curriculums and catalogs or do new ones need to be created?
8. Faculty resources: Are faculty currently available to cover such courses? Would new faculty be required? If so, how many and what kind?
9. Advising for certificate students.
10. How will the department/school implement, monitor, and **assess** the program?

Review/approval levels:

1. Complete online proposal: [https://duq.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_3C1Birtw08e72gl](https://duq.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3C1Birtw08e72gl)
2. Post-secondary (undergraduate) certificates which involve more than one school: Interdisciplinary Curriculum Committee.
3. Post-baccalaureate and post-master's certificates:
  - a. Enrollment Management Group (EMG) does a market study.
  - b. Graduate Council
4. Associate Provost for Academic Affairs/Academic Council
5. Provost and President