

**University of West Florida  
Other Academic Program Approval**

**Proposed Policies and Procedures**

**June 3, 2008**

The Board of Governors has given each university board of trustees the responsibility and authority to promulgate policies for the approval and implementation of academic programs other than degree programs. Such programs include program majors, minors, specializations, concentrations, areas of emphasis, tracks, and certificate programs. The University of West Florida (UWF) has developed criteria and guidelines for other academic program approval relating to program majors, minors, specializations, concentrations, areas of emphasis, tracks, and certificate programs. These programs represent any organized curriculum that is offered as part of an individual student's degree plan and which enhances or complements the degree to be awarded in a manner that leads to specific educational or occupational goals. In the case of certificates, these also represent distinct areas of study leading to specific educational or occupational goals, and for which the university awards a certificate or diploma upon completion. UWF's guidelines adhere to BOG Regulation 6C-8.011(2).

**Policies and Procedures for Majors, Minors, and Specializations**

On November 7, 2003, the UWF Board of Trustees approved the *Procedures for Academic Programs Inventory Updates* also termed the *Procedures for Developing New Academic Programs and for Revising or Deleting Existing Academic Programs*. This document delineates the process for approving new academic degree programs or majors. Development of minors and specializations is carried out through the faculty governance system supported by the UWF Curriculum Change Request (CCR) online system found at the following URL: <http://ccr.enroll.uwf.edu/search.cfm>. UWF's programs do not use the terminology concentrations, areas of emphasis, or tracks.

**Policies and Procedures for Certificates**

**Definition:** Certificates are a focused collection of courses that, when completed, afford the student a record of coherent academic accomplishment in a given discipline or set of related disciplines. The curriculum for certificates is structured to address particular needs for professional advancement, career transition, practical skill training, and personal development and, thus, the curriculum may represent a more practice-oriented subset of an existing discipline. Certificates are not designed to replace existing degree programs or minors, but may serve as means of attracting individuals to a formal degree program and a certificate may be sought after credential. While the courses comprising a certificate may be used as evidence in support of a student's application for admission to an undergraduate or graduate degree program, completion of the certificate itself is not considered to be a prerequisite and does not guarantee admission to any degree program. Certificates differ from undergraduate minors in their focus on non-degree seeking students and their specificity of topic. Certificates may be offered at the undergraduate, graduate, or non-academic (continuing education) levels.

**Undergraduate Certificates** are composed of at least 9 semester hours of existing undergraduate-level academic courses. Offering departments should consider that only 15 semester hours of undergraduate credit taken while in a non-degree status may be applied toward an undergraduate degree. A high school diploma or its equivalent is required for admission to an undergraduate certificate program.

**Graduate Certificates** are composed of at least 9 semester hours of existing graduate-level academic courses. Offering departments should consider that only 12 semester hours of graduate credit taken while in a non-degree status may be applied toward a graduate degree. An earned baccalaureate degree from a regionally accredited institution is required for admission to a graduate certificate program.

**Continuing Education Certificates** are composed of at least 9 semester hours of instruction or an equivalent number of contact hours. The academic department(s) offering the certificate will set the minimum admission requirements for the certificate program.

**Concurrent Enrollment:** Students who are currently enrolled as degree seeking students at the University and who wish to pursue simultaneously a certificate must inform the chairperson of their major department and follow the application process, including fee payment, for the certificate.

**Transfer Courses:** Students may transfer one course (normally three semester hours) with equivalent content from a regionally accredited institution. Course applicability will be determined by the offering department(s).

**Development of Undergraduate and Graduate Certificates:** Certificates will be developed by sponsoring academic departments with the assistance of Continuing Education. Continuing Education will provide assistance in determining the need and potential support for a certificate along with development of a marketing plan.

**Establishment of Certificates:** Since all certificates are sponsored by the University, the following process must be completed before the certificate is advertised.

**Request for Approval.** The sponsoring department(s) will initiate the Request for Certificate Approval that will include as a minimum the following:

- Certificate Title (appears on certificate and transcript)
- Proposed effective date
- Department(s) and contact(s)
- Certificate type – graduate, undergraduate, or continuing education
- Rationale including, as a minimum, university-wide implications of the program in terms of academic mission, need, quality, and resources
- Program outcomes - program level student learning outcomes
- Articulation, including as a minimum, identification of academic units, programs, or courses outside the initiating department(s) that may be impacted

- Program description
- Program requirements including courses. Departments should include minimum GPA requirements, etc. if applicable. (Undergraduate and graduate certificates proposals may not include special topics (x990) courses as these have neither been approved through the CCR process nor may be offered more than two times.)
- Admission requirements including grade point average, test scores, prerequisite courses, and other criteria including degrees, diplomas, and courses, if applicable.

**Processing of Request:** Requests for Certificate Approval will be reviewed in sequence as follows:

#### Undergraduate and Graduate Certificates

- College Dean
- Associate Provost for Academic Innovation and Continuing Education
- Faculty Senate via memo to Academic Council for undergraduate certificates or Graduate Council for graduate certificates, to be acted upon in an expeditious manner (30 to 60 days)
- Vice Provost for Extended Programs
- Provost

#### Continuing Education Certificates

- Associate Provost for Academic Innovation and Continuing Education
- College Dean
- Vice Provost for Extended Programs
- Provost

Upon approval, Continuing Education will notify the Office of the Registrar of the approved certificate. The Registrar will add the certificate to the catalog file and complete other necessary documentation in the student record system.

Once a certificate is established and the department(s) sponsoring the program wants students to be able to use Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) funding, separate documentation must be completed through the UWF Veterans Services Office to obtain approval. The DVA will only certify a program for one catalog year. Thus, reapplication and certification must be accomplished each year.

**Admission:** Continuing Education will provide an Application for Admission to Certificate Program. Each student seeking a certificate will complete this application and an admission decision will be reached by the offering department(s). Unless currently enrolled at the University, students seeking an Undergraduate or Graduate Certificate will also need to complete a Non-Degree Student Application provided by the Office of Admissions. Continuing Education will track the application process, fee payments, and students admitted.

**Completion:** Continuing Education will provide an Application for Completion of Certificate Program. Each student completing a certificate program must complete this form. The sponsoring department(s) will certify completion and forward the form to Continuing Education which will create an appropriate certificate for the student and provide it to the department for presentation (or mail it directly to the student). Continuing Education will notify the University Registrar who will post a certificate comment to the student's transcript.

**Records:** It is the responsibility of Continuing Education to maintain all student records associated with the program. These records should include, but are not limited to, the number of students that apply to the program, the number accepted and denied into the program, the number of students that enrolled each semester in the program, and the number of students who complete the program each semester.

**Program Review:** No later than September 30 of each year, Continuing Education will report the number of students admitted and the number of students completing the certificate during the previous academic year along with a recommendation for continuation or termination of the program. Continuing Education will provide a summary report to the departments offering certificates, provost, college deans, and Faculty Senate. All certificates will be reviewed thoroughly during the regular program review of the department offering the certificate.

**Existing Undergraduate Certificate Programs:** Departments that currently offer undergraduate, for-credit certificates will be given the opportunity to elect to retain departmental control over the admission of students into their undergraduate for-credit certificate program, and the administration and operation of the program. This applies only to existing undergraduate, for-credit certificates. Departments who elect to retain departmental control:

- Are bound by the requirements related to undergraduate certificates, concurrent enrollment, and transfer courses as enumerated in the Other Academic Program Approval Proposed Policies and Procedures.
- May not charge students a fee for admission into the certificate, or administration the program in any way.
- Are responsible for tracking the application process and the students admitted into the certificate program.
- Are responsible for maintaining annual records that include the number of students that apply to the program, the number of students accepted into the program, the number of students who are denied into the program, and the number of students who complete the program. An annual report containing these records will be forwarded to the Office of the Provost on or before August 1 of each year.
- Are responsible for certifying completion for all students who successfully finish the certificate program, and notifying the University Registrar of completion.
- Must elect to retain departmental control no later than Friday, September 5, 2008 by sending a memo to the Provost indicating such election.

**Degree Program Changes Requiring Notification Only or Notification and Approval by SACS:** UWF will follow the procedures of the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) when initiating and/or implementing substantive

program changes. These procedures may include notification only or notification and approval by SACS. Substantive changes encompass off-campus degree program offerings outside of assigned service area, including programs offered through continuing education, degree programs offered under contract as sponsored credit for an external public or private entity, and degree programs offered in foreign countries. Such program changes will also include parallel notification and/or notification and approval by the UWF Board of Trustees.

For purposes of annual review of such programs as off-campus degree program offerings outside of assigned service area, including programs offered through continuing education, degree programs offered under contract as sponsored credit for an external public or private entity, and degree programs offered in foreign countries, these programs will be included in the required annual reports of the respective offering departments.