



Effective:	August 18, 2014
Responsible Executive:	Dean of the Graduate School
Applicability:	Graduate Students
Review By:	August 2022

Graduate certificate programs constitute an integrated curriculum, but not necessarily one aligned with a specific academic program. They may exist within programs, bridge programs or offer content widely useable across programs. Graduate certificate programs consist of a minimum of 9 and maximum of 21 hours of graduate-level course work. The course work may be graded or non-graded. A minimum GPA of 3.0 must be maintained on all graded course work in the certificate program.

Graduate certificate programs pertain to graduate students, whether degree seeking or non-degree seeking. A graduate certificate is distinguished from graduate minors in two primary ways. First, graduate minors are intended exclusively for degree seeking graduate students. Graduate certificates may be directed to both degree seeking and non-degree seeking students. Second, there are limits to the number of course credits taken in pursuit of graduate minors that may be applied to a graduate degree (e.g., masters degrees require 21/30 hours to be in the major discipline). The limiting factor in the application of certificate course credits to graduate degrees is departmental policy or advisory committee recommendations. As an example, if a department developed a certificate program intended only for non-degree seeking students, that department could prevent those certificate courses from applying to a degree. However, in the absence of departmental policy, and with the approval of a student's advisory committee, both degree seeking and non-degree seeking students (if they later change status to degree seeking) may include all certificate-related courses toward degree requirements.

When new graduate certificates are proposed, they undergo the full process of curriculum review. This same process applies regardless of delivery method (i.e., on campus and distance). Special requirements for applicants may be negotiated between the certificate proposing program and the graduate school at the time the program is proposed. Consistent with Graduate School policy related to the Masters and Specialist degrees, all requirements for a graduate certificate must be accomplished within 6 years unless departmental criteria for the certificate necessitate a longer time. Certificate Programs that require an exception to this 6-year time limit must be approved by the Graduate Council. Not only must the content of the proposed certificate be appropriate, but the availability of a viable group of graduate faculty to teach the courses in the certificate must be documented. Proposals for graduate certificate programs must identify a specific person who will serve as

coordinator. Certificates that bridge departments must have a home department to which all certificate applicants apply. But each affiliated department must also designate a coordinator. Students who fulfill all requirements for a graduate certificate will have the certificate noted on their transcript when the Graduate School receives a memo signed by the certificate coordinator documenting the successful completion of all certificate requirements.

Graduate certificates are to be differentiated from professional development certificates. No comprehensive definition of the latter is offered here, however, in brief, completion of a professional development certificate does not require admission to the Graduate School and is awarded based on participation in non-credit work. The definition of graduate certificate does not limit the ability of departments or other units from defining, implementing, or awarding professional development certificates. Professional development certificates are not subject to the Auburn University curriculum process, nor are their achievement noted on Auburn University transcripts.