

COLLEGE of CHARLESTON

OFFICIAL DIVISIONAL POLICY Academic Affairs Division

Policy on Undergraduate Certificates

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1.0 Definition and Purpose of Undergraduate Certificates

An undergraduate certificate is a focused collection of undergraduate courses that, when completed, affords the student some record of academic accomplishment in a given discipline, a set of related disciplines, or an interdisciplinary area. An undergraduate certificate is not a degree, as degrees are defined by the College of Charleston.

2.0 Certificate Program of Study Requirements

2.1 An undergraduate certificate program shall require no fewer than 12 undergraduate and no more than 24 undergraduate credit hours. The minimum number of required credit hours must be consistent with the stated educational objectives of the certificate program.

2.2 All courses applying to the completion of an undergraduate certificate program must be earned with a grade of C or better.

2.3 All requirements for an approved undergraduate certificate program of study shall be published in the College of Charleston *Undergraduate Catalog*, on the relevant institutional websites, and in appropriate promotional materials, if applicable. There is no obligation to incorporate certificate requirements or declarations in the various software tools or products managed by the Office of the Registrar, though the Provost may direct the Office of the Registrar to incorporate those certificate requirements in the appropriate software and for use by students and advisors.

2.4 Requirements for any undergraduate certificate shall be determined in accordance with the undergraduate certificate program described in the College of Charleston *Undergraduate Catalog* for the year in which the student was most recently admitted or readmitted to the College.

2.5 Substitutions for required certificate courses shall be approved only by the Committee on Academic Standards, Admission, and Financial Aid, subject to the review and determination of the Provost. The Provost's decision is final.

2.6 Students must be enrolled at the College of Charleston (hereafter, "College") during the semester or term in which the last course requirement(s) are fulfilled for an undergraduate certificate.

3.0 Institutional Process for Approval of New Undergraduate Certificate Programs

Undergraduate certificate program proposals may be approved by the Provost, the College of Charleston Faculty Senate, and the College of Charleston Board of Trustees, consistent with the normal and customary academic program and course approval policies and procedures of the College of Charleston.

4.0 Criteria Governing Approval of New Undergraduate Certificate Programs

4.1 The proposed sequence of undergraduate coursework must be consistent with the educational objectives of the certificate program. The undergraduate coursework approved for completion of undergraduate certificate programs must be consistent with the coursework definitions offered in the College's course numbering policy (College Policy 7.6.9). Introductory or advanced undergraduate coursework, as appropriate to the educational objectives of the specific certificate program, may be approved for use in completing the program.

4.2 The proposed program must be well-conceived, readily understood, and have the potential to be clearly communicated to the relevant stakeholders.

4.3 A demonstrated need for the proposed program must exist. This provision may be defined in terms of either external markets (i.e., external demand for the skills associated with such a discipline or disciplines) or internal academic needs (i.e., the need for a critical mass of students in a given discipline or disciplines).

4.4 The length of the proposed program and other program features must be consistent with the requirements stated elsewhere in this Policy.

4.5 The proposed program must not identify separate tracks, emphases, options, or concentrations.

5.0 Quality Assurance Requirements for Undergraduate Certificate Programs

5.1 Responsibility for the management of an undergraduate certificate program shall be assigned by the responsible Dean or Deans to a qualified certificate program director, subject to the review and determination of the Provost. The certificate program director ordinarily shall already be assigned the responsibilities for management of a closely related degree program or programs and shall ordinarily receive no additional compensation for the management of the certificate program. Certificates may be approved and offered, however, even when no closely related degree program exists at the College.

5.2 Undergraduate certificate programs ordinarily shall be assessed in conjunction with the assessment activities for a closely related degree program or programs. Separate assessments shall be conducted in cases where simultaneous assessments are not possible.

6.0 Admission and Enrollment Status

6.1 Undergraduate students are not admitted to the College for the purpose of completing undergraduate certificate programs. Any admitted undergraduate student, without regard to admission status, may seek to complete an undergraduate certificate, consistent with all applicable policies and procedures of the College.

6.2 Continuing students have no obligation to announce their intent to complete an undergraduate certificate program. Continuing or former students also have no obligation to complete an application for or accept recognition of a completed undergraduate certificate program.

6.3 Successful completion of an undergraduate certificate program does not guarantee future admission to any College of Charleston undergraduate or graduate degree program.

6.4 The desire of a student to complete the requirements for an undergraduate certificate shall not be germane to the consideration of academic dismissal (or the appeal of a notice of academic dismissal).

7.0 Student Certificate Eligibility

Students who complete each course in the required program of study for an undergraduate certificate, within the required time and with the required academic performance, shall be eligible

to receive the undergraduate certificate if the appropriate application is made and all relevant tuition and fees have been timely paid.

8.0 Undergraduate Credits and Multiple Academic Awards

The same undergraduate credits may be applied both to the requirements for an undergraduate certificate program and to the requirements for an undergraduate degree program or programs, subject to all other applicable academic policies and procedures of the College of Charleston. The same undergraduate credits may not be applied to the requirements for two or more undergraduate certificates.

9.0 Transfer Credits

A minimum of 50 percent of the coursework applied to the requirements of an undergraduate certificate program shall be earned at the College of Charleston. Any transfer credit applied to the requirements of an undergraduate certificate program must be earned within the timeframe permitted at the College of Charleston for completion of undergraduate certificates, as described in Section 10.0 of the current Policy.

10.0 Time for Completion of Undergraduate Certificates

The time for completion of a certificate shall not exceed five (5) years, unless an exception to this requirement is approved by the Committee on Academic Standards, Admissions, and Financial Aid, subject to the review and determination of the Provost.

11.0 Certificate Completion and Award

11.1 Approved undergraduate certificate programs shall be published in the College of Charleston *Undergraduate Catalog*. A student who completes all stated requirements for an undergraduate certificate and wishes to have the certificate recognized must complete the application for recognition of an undergraduate certificate, as promulgated by the Office of the Registrar. The application for recognition of an undergraduate certificate must be completed and submitted within 12 months of the completion of the final course requirement(s) for the certificate, or the certificate will not be recognized by the College.

11.2 The College of Charleston does not recognize completion of certificate programs as part of commencement ceremonies. Following completion of certificate requirements and payment of an approved fee for the production of the certificate, students shall be provided with an attractive certificate modeled on the diploma of the College of Charleston. Unless otherwise determined by action of the College of Charleston Board of Trustees, the institutionally approved fee for the production of a diploma recognizing receipt of an undergraduate degree shall be separately charged for the production of an undergraduate certificate. At the sole discretion of the relevant academic administrator, the President, the Provost, or any Dean appointed in the Academic Affairs Division may choose to recognize one or more undergraduate certificate recipients in a

private ceremony scheduled in a facility or on a campus of the College of Charleston.

11.3 For any non-degree-seeking student, certificates will be awarded and posted on a student transcript at the end of the fall, spring, or summer term. For degree-seeking students, certificates will be awarded and posted on the transcript at the end of the semester in which the last course is completed. Degree-seeking students may receive recognition for the receipt of the undergraduate certificate prior to completion of a degree.

11.4 Consistent with the other provisions of this Policy, undergraduate certificates shall be recognized when all certificate requirements have been met by the student and the relevant application and fees have been received, even when the student is otherwise subject to academic probation or dismissal.

12.0 Policy Application

12.1 All admissions, academic, and student policies of the College of Charleston apply to students who are working to complete an undergraduate certificate. The relevant institutional policies include, but are not limited to, the College's substantive change policy (College Policy 7.6.8), the College's policy for undergraduate admission (College Policy 12.1.6), and those policies published in the College of Charleston *Undergraduate Catalog*.

12.2 Undergraduate certificate records shall be maintained in the College's relevant enterprise software systems, as the National Clearinghouse does not report earned undergraduate certificates.

12.3 Should the College enter into an agreement with another university to jointly offer an undergraduate certificate program, the College shall abide by the relevant policy statements of its regional accreditor, SACSCOC, on the creation and operation of joint academic awards.

13.0 Policy Manager and Responsible Department or Office

Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs (or Provost's Designee)

14.0 Procedures Related to this Policy

The Registrar and any Dean appointed in the Academic Affairs Division may create procedures for the management of undergraduate certificate programs within their scope of responsibility, subject to the review and determination of the Provost.

15.0 Related Policies, Documents or Forms

College of Charleston *Undergraduate Catalog*

Faculty/Administration Manual

Policy 7.6.8, "Substantive Change"

Policy 7.6.9, "Course Numbering Policy"

Policy 12.1.6, "Policy of Applicants for Undergraduate Admission: Degree and Non-Degree"

UCSC Graduate School Policy, "Policies and Procedures for Graduate Certificate Programs"

16.0 **Review Schedule**

Approved: December 2017

Reviewed: February 2019

Next Review Date: October 1, 2024



Signed: _____

Brian R. McGee, Provost