

COLLEGE of CHARLESTON

OFFICIAL DIVISIONAL POLICY Academic Affairs Division

Policy on Undergraduate Certificates

Contents

- 1.0 Definition and Purpose of Undergraduate Certificates
- 2.0 Certificate Program of Study Requirements
- 3.0 Institutional Process for Approval of New Undergraduate Certificate Programs
- 4.0 Criteria Governing Approval of New Undergraduate Certificate Programs
- 5.0 Quality Assurance Requirements for Undergraduate Certificate Programs
- 6.0 Admission and Enrollment Status
- 7.0 Student Certificate Eligibility
- 8.0 Undergraduate Credits and Multiple Academic Awards
- 9.0 Transfer Credits
- 10.0 Certificate Completion and Award
- 11.0 Policy Application
- 12.0 Policy Manager and Responsible Department or Office
- 13.0 Procedures Related to this Policy
- 14.0 Related Policies, Documents or Forms
- 15.0 Review Schedule

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. The purpose of a certificate program is for students to obtain specific competencies related to an area of expertise.

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 excluding requisites. The minimum number of required credit hours must be consistent with the stated educational objectives of the certificate program.

2.2 A minimum GPA of 2.000 in certificate courses is required to earn the certificate.

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.

2.4 Students must fulfill the certificate requirements in the catalog at the time of certificate declaration. Continuously enrolled students have the option to update their catalog year to the current year for each certificate.

2.5 Only under unavoidable and exceptional circumstances will the faculty permit substitution for or exception from the curriculum published in the catalog. No exceptions or waivers may be made for GPA requirements. No waivers or exceptions will be made for certificate minimum credit hour requirements. There are no exceptions to Academic Regulations published in the catalog. In some cases, as stated in the catalog, students retain appeal rights.

3.0 Institutional Process for Approval of New Undergraduate Certificate Programs

Undergraduate certificate program proposals are approved 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 constitute a coherent focus and may not be subdivided into 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 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 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 Successful completion of an undergraduate certificate program does not guarantee future admission to any College of Charleston undergraduate or graduate degree program.

6.3 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 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.

9.0 Transfer Credits

No more than six (6) credit hours of transferable credit may be applied to completion of an undergraduate certificate at the College of Charleston.

10.0 Certificate Completion and Award

10.1 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.

10.2 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 a 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.

10.3 Certificates will be awarded and posted on a student's transcript at the end of the fall, spring, or summer term in which they apply for recognition of an undergraduate certificate. Degree-seeking students may receive recognition for the receipt of the undergraduate certificate prior to completion of a degree.

10.4 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.

11.0 Policy Application

11.1 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*.

11.2 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.

12.0 Policy Manager and Responsible Department or Office

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

13.0 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.

14.0 **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"

15.0 **Review Schedule**

Status: Pending Approval

Next Review Date: TBD



Signed: _____

Brian R. McGee, Provost