

Certificate Program Committee Procedures



New Certificate Program Approval Process

DRAFTED JULY 2014

A certificate program begins development and is approved to go to the Board of Governors (BOG) through existing processes in Undergraduate Affairs or the Graduate School. As a part of these processes, the Undergraduate Affairs office or the Graduate School will ask the program whether or not it is seeking financial aid eligibility for its students.

- If the program **is not seeking** financial aid eligibility for its students:
 1. BOG approves the certificate program to be offered.
 2. *If necessary*, the Provost's Office will submit the program to the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) for approval. Costs for the approval process will be carried by the department developing the certificate program.
 3. The program may begin to advertise and admit students. No further action needs to be taken by the Certificate Program Committee.

- If the program **is seeking** financial aid eligibility for its students:
 1. BOG approves the certificate program to be offered.
 2. The Undergraduate Affairs office or Graduate School will forward the full program proposal, BOG documents, and any other supporting materials to the Certificate Program Committee within 30 days of BOG approval for financial aid eligibility evaluation.
 3. The Certificate Program Committee will review and determine eligibility within 30 days of receiving the documents and provide feedback to the program.
 - If the Committee determines the program **is not eligible** for financial aid:
 1. The Certificate Program Committee will notify the program of the decision.
 2. *If necessary*, the Provost's Office will submit the program to the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) for approval. Costs for the approval process will be carried by the department developing the certificate program.
 3. The program may begin to advertise and admit students. Programs that have not been fully approved may not advertise the existence of such a program.

 - If the Committee determines the program **is eligible** for financial aid:
 1. The Certificate Program Committee will notify the program of the decision.
 2. The program will appoint an individual as the responsible party for employment tracking and gainful employment requirements within 10 days of the notice of eligibility. Failure to do so will result in an automatic disqualification of financial aid eligibility.
 3. *If necessary*, the Provost's Office will submit the program to the HLC for approval. Costs for the approval process will be carried by the department developing the certificate program.

4. The program may begin to advertise and admit students. Programs that have not been fully approved may not advertise the existence of such a program. Programs should use the following statement in materials at this stage: "Not all certificate programs are eligible for Financial Aid. This program is currently under consideration by the Federal Department of Education for financial aid eligibility."
5. The Provost's Office prepares the Gainful Employment Disclosure and works with Marketing and Financial Aid to post the document within 30 days of the notice of eligibility.
6. Financial Aid adds the program to the Program Participation Agreement (PPA) within 30 days of the notice of eligibility and requests Federal Department of Education (DOE) approval. **NOTE:** *This step may take up to three months to complete. The University has no control over how long DOE approval may take.*
7. Financial Aid will notify the program within 10 days once the program is added to the PPA and approval is granted by the DOE.
8. Once the program is approved by the DOE, the program may begin to advertise full financial aid eligibility and the Office of Financial Aid may begin offer aid packages.

Criteria for Evaluation of Certificate Programs for Financial Aid Eligibility

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1. Is there a Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) code that matches the CIP code assigned to the program? Is this code still appropriate for the current incarnation of the program?
2. Does the program provide skills and knowledge that match the description included for the SOC code?
3. Inclusion factors (if “yes,” the program is most likely qualified for financial aid eligibility):
 - a. Is holding the certificate a requirement to work in the occupation? For example, is it a prerequisite to obtaining a license or certification?
4. Exclusion factors (if “yes,” the program is most likely not qualified for financial aid eligibility):
 - a. Is the program primarily intended to enhance the skills or knowledge used by an individual already working in the occupation rather than intended to provide the skills and knowledge required to obtain employment in the occupation?
 - b. Is the program primarily intended to support admission to another academic program?
 - c. Is the program primarily intended for personal enrichment?
5. Is there a market demand for the skills provided by the program? In making this determination, the committee may consider any information that it deems to be relevant, including data provided for the SOC code by ONet (such as job and market information), graduation rates, enrollment information, job openings, and placement information. The committee may obtain relevant information from the department or any other reliable source.