
Procedure	Certificate Program Criteria
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Procedure Number:	201.15
Date Adopted:	4/30/2026
Last Revision:	4/30/2026
References:	BOR Policy 301.12
Approved by:	ASCRC, Graduate Council, Faculty Senate

Purpose

Certificate programs governed by this procedure are academic, credit-bearing programs that culminate in the awarding of a certificate rather than a degree, as defined by BOR Policy 301.12. These programs are designed to develop specialized knowledge, skills, and competencies, typically with a practical or applied focus, and are intended to demonstrate to employers that the student has completed a defined and approved course of study. Certificates may function either as stand-alone credentials or as supplements to degree programs.

This procedure also serves to clearly distinguish formally approved certificate programs from non-credit recognitions such as certificates of attendance, participation, or completion. Only certificates that have been formally approved by the Faculty Senate (and Board of Regents, where applicable) may include the wording: “awarded by The University of Montana” or “The University of Montana awards...” all such approved certificates are recorded on the student’s official transcript.

Types of Certificate Programs

Undergraduate Certificates

Undergraduate certificate programs are defined in accordance with BOR Policy 301.12 and may include:

1. Career Certificate (9-15 credits) – Short programs focused on specific competencies or skills.
2. Certificate of Technical Studies (CTS) (16-29 credits) – Applied programs designed to develop technical competencies and may incorporate industry recognized credentials.
3. Certificate of Applied Science (CAS) (30-45 credits) – Workforce-oriented programs designed for immediate employment, typically completed within one year and including limited general education coursework.
4. Certificate of General Studies – Programs recognizing completion of an approved general education curriculum that satisfies the requirements of board policy 301.10.

Graduate Certificates

Graduate certificate programs:

- Require 12-29 credits
- Focus on advanced, specialized knowledge or professional skill development
- May be applied or academic in nature

Review Criteria

1. Each certificate program shall require a minimum of 12 credits. 29 credits are the maximum credits for a graduate certificate program not requiring Board of Regents approval.
2. Each certificate program shall have a common core of at least 6 credits to ensure curricular coherence. Only existing or newly approved courses with clearly defined learning outcomes are eligible for the common core. Except for unusual circumstances, the common core should not include X90 Research, X91 Special Topics/Experimental Courses, X92 Independent Studies, X95 Field Work/Clinical/Practicum/Student Teaching/Studio, X98 Internship/Externship/Professional Paper, and X99 Capstone/Thesis credits.
3. The content of the required and elective courses shall reflect the practical knowledge, skills, and abilities that the certificate program intends to develop.
4. Certificate programs may designate other requirements, such as licensure requirements or other professionally required certificates, internships, work projects, or attendance at professional meetings or symposia.
5. All courses shall be completed with a minimum grad of C- for undergraduate certificate programs and a minimum of B- for graduate certificate programs. Programs may establish higher standards.
6. Each certificate program shall be directed by a tenured or tenure-track faculty member, administrator, or their designee.

Admissions and Conferral

1. All students pursuing a certificate must be formally admitted or declared in accordance with institutional requirements.
2. Certificates requiring fewer than 16 credits are ineligible for Federal Financial Aid and must disclose this status in all public facing materials including the catalog.
3. Only certificates that have been formally approved by the Faculty Senate (and Board of Regents, where applicable) may include the wording: “awarded by The University of Montana” or “The University of Montana awards...”
4. Certificates issued by the Registrar: must follow a standardized institutional format, must include the University of Montana Logo, and must have wording approved by the Provost.
5. The name of the certificate program and the date awarded shall be recorded on the student’s transcript.
6. Each certificate program shall be reviewed in conjunction with the regularly scheduled review of the academic unit(s) sponsoring the program.