

Resolution for Modifying Certificate Definitions

Second Reading

April 3, 2023

Faculty Senate

Ohio University

Whereas Ohio University offers academic programs categorized into degrees, majors, minors, and certificates.

Whereas the University Curriculum Council (UCC) is a statutory body established by Faculty Senate to discharge Faculty Senate's responsibilities with respect to curricular matters including the addition, relocation, and deletion of academic programs.

Whereas UCC currently administers approval of a single classification of undergraduate certificates and three classifications of graduate certificates (interdisciplinary, specialized, and stackable).

Whereas Faculty Senate modified undergraduate certificate descriptions and requirements through the "Resolution to Amend Undergraduate Certificate Description and Requirements" (passed: March 14, 2022; subsequently signed by the Executive Vice President & Provost).

Whereas the Ohio Department of Higher Education (ODHE) provides uniform definitions (see Appendix) for certificates and credentials for all state higher education institutions.

Whereas the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) requires academic certificates to have distinct, assessable learning outcomes and to have demonstrated program assessment and continuous improvement.

Therefore, be it resolved, that that the definitions and requirements for undergraduate certificates shall be modified to read as follows:

Undergraduate Certificates

Certificates are academic credentials awarded by the university, recorded on a student's transcript, and represent the completion of a cohesive program of study of significantly smaller size than a degree program. Such certificate programs fall under the jurisdiction of the University Curriculum Council and are governed by the curricular approval process.

To differentiate undergraduate certificate programs, certificate program names must be unique across all undergraduate certificate program types.

Undergraduate certificates must have assessable program-level learning outcomes and document assurance of learning through the teaching-learning-assessment cycle.

Undergraduate certificate programs are divided into two classes: interdisciplinary and specialized. The definitions of these classes are as follows:

Interdisciplinary Certificates

These certificate programs are offered as a means of enhancing degrees awarded by the university. Such certificates are designed to provide a significant interdisciplinary academic experience, and are intended to complement a major program, broaden career possibilities, or allow study in an area of interest from a variety of perspectives.

Interdisciplinary certificate programs require:

- courses from at least two disciplines, typically distinct departments
- 12 credits minimum
- 24 credits maximum

Courses at the 3000-level or above are encouraged but not required.

Specialized Certificates

This class comprises any undergraduate certificate programs that do not fit into the category of interdisciplinary certificates. These specialized certificate programs may be related to external agency licensure, endorsements, or certifications, and do not require the interdisciplinary component of traditional certificates.

All specialized certificate programs require:

- 12 credits minimum
- 24 credits maximum

Non-credit Certifications

Consistent with the Ohio Department of Higher Education definitions for certificates and credentials, Ohio University academic and non-academic units may offer non-credit certifications. Students pursuing such non-credit certifications may not use Federal financial aid nor University scholarships for their completion. These certifications will not be recorded on the student's transcript, nor will the university issue an official academic credential upon completion.

The following types of non-credit certifications may be offered, subject to review and approval by the provost's office.

Workforce Development Certifications

These certifications comprise a prescribed program delivered by Ohio University that may or may not be associated with a degree, major, minor, or certificate. Workforce development certifications are designed as a means for learners to renew and retrain knowledge and skills in

an ever-changing workforce. These programs are non-credit bearing, stand-alone programs offered by Ohio University as a workshop or series of workshops focused on a specific topic or field of study. These programs may be related to external agency licensure, endorsements, or certifications and need not be limited to degree-seeking students.

- Admission and costs are subject to the specific unit offering the program and not governed by Ohio University degree-seeking admission requirements or tuition fees.
- Workforce development certification programs are not eligible for Federal financial aid, university-provided scholarships, or direct study loans.
- Workforce development certification programs are not eligible for a university-issued diploma, transfer credit, or other university-approved academic credential. Instead, units may offer participants with “certifications of completion” after completing the program.
- To ensure workforce development certifications do not overlap with academic programs, workforce development certifications are in addition subject to review and approval by the University Curriculum Council.

Third-Party Skill Certifications

These are non-credit bearing, stand-alone certifications offered by an industry recognized third-party. A third-party skill certification is either an (a) minor certification in and of itself (e.g., Microsoft Word Expert) or (b) an embedded component of a more comprehensive industry certification (e.g., Manufacturing Skills Standards Council (MSSC) Safety is an embedded certification for the MSSC Certified Production Technician).

- Ohio University academic units may embed third-party skill certifications as a component of the curriculum for a credit-bearing academic course or degree program.
- Third-party skill certifications are not eligible for a university-issued diploma, transfer credit, or other university-approved academic credential. These certifications will not be on the student’s official transcript issued by the University Registrar.
- Third-party skill certifications are typically not subject to review and approval by the University Curriculum Council.

APPENDIX
Ohio Department of Higher Education Certificate and Credentials

Background

In a rapidly evolving economy, Ohio must continue to highlight the qualified talent produced by the state's public technical centers, colleges, and universities to meet the needs of our workforce. Because these education institutions had various reporting requirements, Ohio was not consistently reporting how our graduates were measuring up to workforce needs. The variations in reporting post-secondary completion certificates did not allow for Ohio to have a consistent and accurate count for the credentials and demonstrations of skills valued by employers.

The Ohio Department of Higher Education has now carved out uniform definitions for certificates and a process for capturing the work of Ohio's public technical centers, colleges, and universities.

Definitions

General Certificates (Reported to ODHE, but may not require ODHE approval or designation)

- **Undergraduate/ Sub-Baccalaureate Certificate:** An award from an educational institution that requires completion of an organized program of study at the postsecondary level (below the baccalaureate degree). These certificates are classified by IPEDs as “less than one year,” “at least one but less than two academic years” or “at least two but less than four academic years”.

Technical Certificates (Reported to ODHE and require designation [for colleges and universities] or approval [for technical centers] by ODHE)

- **One Year Technical Certificate/ Technical Certificate:** Certificates awarded by a post-secondary institution for the completion of an organized program of study in at least 30 semester credit hours or 900 clock hours, with the majority of the coursework completed in a prescribed technical area. While the certificates are designed to have value apart from a degree, these certificates should serve as building blocks to an associate degree. The technical certificate is designed for an occupation or specific employment opportunities. These certificates should prepare students for a valid occupational license or third-party industry certification, if available, related to the field of study.
- **Less Than One Year Technical Certificate/ Short-Term Technical Certificate:** Certificates awarded by a post-secondary institution for the completion of an organized program of study in less than 30 semester credit hours or less than 900 clock hours that are designed for an occupation or specific employment opportunities. These certificates should prepare students for a valid occupational license or third-party industry certification, if available, related to the field of study.

Criteria Required for Industry-Recognized Credentials: Valid Occupational Licenses or Third-Party Industry Certifications

- **All occupational licenses and registries** provided by state or national professional boards.
- **The apprenticeship completion certificate** issued by the Ohio State Apprenticeship Council. Apprenticeship completion certificates **issued to students who achieved journeyman status** for programs not registered with the state may also be reported.
- **Industry certifications from a valid third-party.** To assist in verification of the validity of the third-party certifications, ODHE, in collaboration with the Ohio Department of Education, has developed a list of approved industry certifications. A process for submitting certifications for approval that are not on the initial list is available below (See Approval and Review Processes). To be approved, third-party certifications must:
 - Demonstrate preparation for **an occupation or occupational cluster**. Certifications, such as OSHA 10 or CPR, that only encompass basic safety or a basic skill requirement and do

not demonstrate a distinguishable competency for a specific job are not requested for state reporting and, standing alone, may not qualify a certificate program as technical according to the Ohio Department of Higher Education criteria.

- **Be governed by a regional, statewide, national, or international body** for the related field or industry. Preference is given to national and international bodies.
 - **Be recognized and valued by employers, especially sector partnerships, as leading to employment.** Certifications that are only valued for association or affinity group membership are not recommended.
 - Be **related to the learning objectives** of the program of study.
 - Be **awarded based on results from standardized and reliable assessments** that measure the designated competencies of the occupation or skill set. The state also prefers but does not require that assessments are independently graded from the educational institution.
- **NOTES ON INDUSTRY-RECOGNIZED CREDENTIALS:**
 - **Embedded skill certifications:** An embedded certification is a minor certification in and of itself as well as a component of a more comprehensive industry certification. For example, Manufacturing Skills Standards Council (MSSC) Safety is an embedded certification for the MSSC Certified Production Technician and Microsoft Word is an embedded certification for Microsoft Office. Embedded skill certifications as stand-alone certifications may be collected for the purpose of reporting outcomes related to the Perkins Act but standing alone, may not qualify a certificate program as technical according to the Ohio Department of Higher Education criteria.
 - If a credential is not approved or deemed inapplicable for what the Ohio Department of Higher Education would like to report, this does not in and of itself restrict the school from using the credential.

Approval and Review Processes

Colleges and Universities may submit new certificate programs for technical designation or approval can contact Matt Exline at mexline@highered.ohio.gov ([link sends e-mail](#)) or 614-728-3095. **Ohio Adult Technical Centers** should submit new certificate program for technical designation approval through the OTC HEI Data system at: <https://otc-hei.ohiohighered.org>

Technical certificates are to be related to an occupational license or third-party certification when available. Institutions may use a license or certification on the [Ohio Department of Higher Education Approved Third Party Credential List](#) or [submit a new third-party credential](#) to be considered for the list.