

**Graduate Certificate Program
Graduate School
Texas Tech University**

July 26, 2005

Graduate Certificate Program

The purpose for offering graduate certificates is to meet the supplemental education needs of professionals. As jobs and job-related responsibilities change, a person often needs additional training in a specific area. For example, an architect who once thought s/he would design new buildings may become involved in preservation of historical districts. If this architect had not taken any historical preservation courses for the primary degree, a graduate certificate in Historic Preservation would provide needed knowledge. Providing graduate certificates for workforce development is a high priority for the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

A graduate certificate program is a set of courses that provides in-depth knowledge in a subject matter. The knowledge in the set of courses should provide a coherent knowledge base even if the courses are selected from more than one academic program. The set of courses may be more practice-oriented than the set of courses in a graduate academic program.

General Process for Developing a Graduate Certificate

The general process for developing a graduate certificate is briefly described below. Following the general process are the specifics for each step. The process is as follows:

1. Faculty members recognize a need for a graduate certificate program. They document the need and prepare an application for a graduate certificate program.
2. The department, by whatever process it has for approving academic programs, approves the application for a graduate certificate program.
3. The department sends the application for a graduate certificate program to the college for its approval by the academic program committee or the normal approval process for the college.
4. The college sends the application for a graduate certificate program to the Graduate School where it will be evaluated by the Academic Programs Committee of the Graduate Council. Its recommendation will be forwarded to the Graduate Council for formal approval.
5. Upon approval by the Graduate Council, the application for a graduate certificate program will be forwarded to the Academic Council for its approval.
6. Upon approval by the Academic Council, the application for a graduate certificate is forwarded to the Provost for final approval.
7. If the graduate certificate program is over 14 hours and less than 30 hours, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board is notified. It does not need to approve the graduate certificate program.

Specifics of Completing an Application for a Graduate Certificate Program

Below is further information for the completion of each of the steps mentioned above:

Preparation of Application: The application requires: (1) Name of graduate certificate program; (2) Name of home department and college; (3) Name of advisor(s) who will be admitting and advising the students; (4) List of required courses, prerequisites for the courses, the frequency which the course will be taught (every semester, once per year, every three long semesters, etc.), and whether the courses will be taught by distance; (5) Are the courses available or will they need to be developed? If the courses need to be developed, the applications for the new courses should accompany the application for the graduate certificate program; (6) Explain what workforce needs are being met by the graduate certificate program, how many students per year are expected, and how market demand for the program was determined; (7) Explanation of impact on existing graduate degree programs; (8) List of any existing certificate programs in the home department.

Departmental Approval: The department chair should sign the application indicating that the program has been approved by the department and that the department is willing to administer the graduate certificate program. The department chair's signature also indicates that the proposed graduate certificate program meets the academic standards for graduate certificate programs. The graduate certificate program should support the strategic plan of the department.

College Approval: The signature of the Dean or his or her representative indicates that the proposed graduate certificate program meets the academic quality for academic programs and that it supports the strategic plan of the college.

Graduate Council Approval: The acceptance of the proposed graduate certificate program by the Graduate Council indicates that the program does not duplicate any other graduate certificate program, that the courses selected for the program are sufficient to justify a graduate certificate program and that it meets workforce needs in the State of Texas.

Academic Council Approval: The acceptance of the proposed graduate certificate program by the Academic Council indicates the program is acceptable for the university, the program's content base is sufficient to justify a graduate certificate program, and the program is designed to operate in a way that will maintain the academic integrity of existing academic programs.

Provost Approval: The approval by the Provost indicates that the proposed graduate certificate program has been reviewed by all potential stakeholders and that it meets the academic standards of the institution.

Reporting To THECB: If necessary, the Provost's Office will inform the THECB of the graduate certificate program. Reporting is required if there is more than 14 hours of course work and if there is less than 29 hours required for the graduate certificate program. In this case the THECB does not need to approve the program but merely needs to be informed of its existence.

Operating Procedures for Graduate Certificate Programs

1. A request from the Graduate School will be made regularly to the faculty to identify areas where graduate certificates could be offered. A departmental/area request for a certificate program should be made only after the need and interest is determined by the requesting unit.
2. The approval of a graduate certificate program will go from the department, to the college, to the Graduate Council, to the Academic Council, and then to the Provost. The Board of Regents will be informed about the graduate certificate program as an "Informational Item." A standing committee of the Graduate Council will review all graduate certificate programs every three years. (Procedure to be developed at a later time.)
3. A student applying for a graduate certificate program will be admitted with a "GCRT" designation and will not be required to take the GRE or GMAT but will need to meet all other requirements for graduate admission. To take any graduate course, all prerequisite courses (including undergraduate courses) must be taken and necessary background obtained before attempting the course. A student will be required to have a baccalaureate degree to start a graduate certificate program. There is only one exception to having a baccalaureate degree. If an undergraduate student from Texas Tech University has a 3.00 GPA and is within 12 hours of completion, then he or she may start taking graduate courses toward a graduate certificate. The student must have a baccalaureate degree to receive a graduate certificate.
4. Graduate credits earned while the student is enrolled in a graduate certificate program may not be applied toward a graduate degree unless the student completes the GRE or GMAT and enrolls as a fully accredited graduate student. The advising for specific graduate certificate programs will be done by the initiating department.
5. After taking the GRE or GMAT and after fulfilling all other admission requirements, a student may use the courses taken for a graduate certificate for a graduate degree if the courses fulfill the requirements of the program of study for the degree.
6. A graduate student may pursue a graduate certificate that is outside the program of study for her or his graduate degree.
7. When possible, courses used for graduate certificate programs should be made available as distance education courses.
8. The courses taken and the acknowledgement that the student has received a graduate certificate will be placed on the student's transcript.
9. The final certificate documents for the graduate certificate programs will be generated by the Graduate School and will have the signatures of the Dean of the college granting the certificate, the Graduate School Dean, and the President. The Graduate School will certify the completion of the graduate certificate and send the certificate to the student.

10. This proposal is intended to govern stand-alone certification, and is not intended to govern certification that is already included under the umbrella of a graduate degree. If the training involved in a certificate program is a subset of the requirements in an existing degree program, such as would be the case for graduate students who choose to concentrate their studies in an area of specialization within their chosen graduate degree program, and the student obtains the degree, the certificate may be awarded as byproduct of the degree, without separate approval from the Graduate School. (Note: This is a grandfather clause for existing certificates that are being awarded by the individual colleges.)
11. No more than one transfer course (if approved by the advisor of the graduate certificate program and the Graduate School) will be allowed for a graduate certificate program.
12. If a graduate student is in good standing and is dropping out of the graduate program, the student may receive a graduate certificate if he or she has taken the necessary courses.
13. To receive a graduate certificate, a student must have a GPA of 3.00 or better. No grade lower than a "C" will be accepted.
14. A graduate certificate program generally will be made up of no fewer than 12 hours and no more than 15 hours of graduate courses. All graduate certificate programs will follow the rules and regulations of the THECB. The relevant regulations are presented below. Please note that the number of hours for a graduate certificate program may exceed 15 hours if necessary, with justification.

Application for Graduate Certificate Program

1. Name of Graduate Certificate Program.
2. Name of home department and home college.
3. Graduate advisor(s) for graduate certificate program (admissions and advising).
4. Required courses and electives (specify each)

| Courses & Titles | Frequency of Course Offering | Prerequisites | Frequency of Prerequisite Offering | Taught by Distance |
|---------------------|---------------------------------|---------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |

5. Are all courses currently available? If not, the applications for new courses must accompany this proposal.
6. What workforce needs (or creative needs) are being met by the establishment of the proposed graduate certificate program? How many students per year do you anticipate using the program? How was the above information determined?
7. What impact will the program have on your existing graduate degree programs?
8. Do you have any existing graduate certificate programs?

Department Chair Signature

Date

Typed or Printed Name

Dean of College Signature

Date

Typed or Printed Name

Dean of Graduate School Signature

Date

Typed or Printed Name

Provost Signature

Date

Typed or Printed Name