

***Guidelines and Procedures for Developing Post-baccalaureate Certificate Programs
For New Mexico State University (March 7, 2007)***

A. Introduction and Definitions

A certificate of specialization is a program of study that is designed to develop or enhance a focused area of expertise. The primary purpose of certificate programs is to provide specific skill training to enhance employability to quickly meet manpower needs within the state of New Mexico, the region, the United States and/or the world. Certificate programs can be offered to currently enrolled degree seeking students *and* students that meet the admissions criteria but that enroll solely to obtain a certificate in a given area of expertise.

Concentrations or specializations differ from certificate programs in that they are designed to meet the needs of enrolled degree seeking students of New Mexico State University.

A graduate certificate is not an official graduate degree of New Mexico State University. It is a focused collection of courses that are successfully completed by students in a given discipline or a set of related disciplines. Students that successfully complete a certificate program at the graduate level will receive a certificate of completion statement on their official transcript and a formal certificate from NMSU.

Certificate programs are offered by universities to help meet employment needs of students and employers, and the needs of life time learners.

- *Meeting the needs of our alumni:* For the alumni of New Mexico State University, it provides an opportunity for alumni to build on existing skills that they acquired at NMSU.
- *Recruiting new students to NMSU:* For academic departments of NMSU, it is an excellent way to recruit students into existing degree programs. Once students complete a certificate program, they can transfer credits into a related degree program.
- *Meeting the needs of employers:* For employers in the area, certificate programs enhance the skills of their employees and help industries and service providers adapt to changes in the local and global market place.
- *Building campus-community relationships with retirees:* Las Cruces attracts retirees from all over the United States and the world. Certificate programs will allow retirees to complete a program of study without having to invest several years into a graduate degree.

Alumni, employees and retirees will bring a wealth of experience to the classroom that will enrich the learning experience of all.

The following sections provide information to guide the development of certificate programs at New Mexico State University.

B. Course Credit Requirements

Certificate programs offered by institutions of higher learning within the state of New Mexico must include at least 12 credit hours of course work that is interrelated and designed to develop a focused skill or area of expertise. Certificate programs cannot exceed 18 credit hours. Courses that comprise the certificate must be regular approved courses that are offered by New Mexico State University. (Note: this is a requirement of the Administrative Code 5 NMAC 5.2 on New Degree and Certificate Programs, <http://www.nmcpr.state.nm.us/nmac/parts/title05/05.005.0002.htm>)

C. Admissions

Students enrolled in post-baccalaureate certificate programs must meet the same admissions criteria as students admitted into graduate degree programs of the Graduate School and department(s) offering the certificate program (admissions requirements can include GPA, GRE or other standardized test, TOEFL, IELTS, and work experience if these are also requirements of students admitted into the regular degree program).

Students who are currently enrolled in a degree program at NMSU who wish to pursue an approved graduate certificate program must apply for admission to the certificate program prior to completing half of their required degree credits. Certificate-only seeking graduate students who are not currently enrolled in either a master's or doctoral degree program will be admitted into a separate classification such as "*certificate graduate students*".

Students enrolled in certificate programs or who successful complete a certificate program within a 5 year period and who wish to enter a related graduate degree program must re-apply to the degree program.

D. Transfer of Credits

Students enrolled in certificate programs cannot transfer credits from another institution towards the completion of the certificate program offered by New Mexico State University. However, they can transfer credits taken in a certificate program of NMSU into a graduate degree program of New Mexico Sate University provided that the courses will lead towards a graduate degree in the focused area of the certificate program. The number of transfer credits will be determined by the program of study. The time limit on course transfer is 5 years after the completion of the certificate.

E. Development of Proposals for New Graduate Certificate Programs

Internal proposals for new certificate programs should include:

- 1) The title of the certificate program and proposed start date.
- 2) The purpose of the certificate program.
- 3) Evidence of need. Why is the certificate needed? What educational objectives will be achieved? Who will the certificate program serve? Will the certificate help meet employment needs within the state, region and/or the United States? Evidence of need can include employer surveys *and* student surveys, and projections of labor force needs. Other types of unmet needs as identified by faculty can also be included in the proposal.
- 4) Description of prospective students who will benefit from the certificate.
- 5) List of Academic departments/units involved in the delivery of courses.
- 6) Detailed discussion of the Program of Study including the course names and numbers, and course sequence. Please indicate how the courses will be delivered (distance learning tools, face-to-face classroom experience, or a combination of different modes). A brief description of each course must also be included in the proposal.
- 7) Number of courses that can be transferred into a graduate degree program.
- 8) Admission requirements
- 9) Marketing strategy to recruit students.
- 10) Letters of support from the academic dean(s) and the department head(s) involved in course delivery.
- 11) An evaluation strategy must be included in the proposal.
- 12) A statement of resource needs for implementation must also be included.
- 13) Name and contact information of the faculty program coordinator.

F. Process of Approval

Certificate programs *that do not require new resources* and can be implemented with existing faculty, existing courses and existing facilities will be approved internally by the: a) Graduate Council and the Graduate School, b) the Academic Dean's Council, and c) the Executive Vice President and Provost for Academic Affairs. The proposal must be submitted four weeks prior to the monthly meeting of the Graduate Council. The proposal will be put on the agenda of the Graduate Council as soon as feasible. Faculty must give an oral presentation of the proposal to the Graduate Council and answer questions concerning the proposal. Please contact the Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost for Academic Affairs to place the proposal on the Academic Dean's Council agenda.

The NM Higher Education Department requires a signature sheet for new certificate programs. The approval signature sheet for proposals that do not require additional resource includes: a) the Department Head (s); b) the Academic Dean(s); c) the Graduate School Dean for the Graduate Council; d) the Executive Vice President and Provost for Academic Affairs for the Academic Dean's Council, and e) the Executive Vice President and Provost for Academic Affairs for senior administration of NMSU.

Graduate Certificate proposals *that require additional resources* including additional faculty, courses and facilities must undergo both an internal and external review process.

The internal review process includes: a) Graduate Council and the Graduate School, b) the Academic Dean's Council, and c) the Executive Vice President and Provost for Academic Affairs. The external review process will include the NM Council of Graduate Deans, the Academic Council, NM HED and the NM Board of Finance.

The approval signature sheet for proposals that require additional resources includes: a) the Department Head(s); b) the Academic Dean(s); c) the Graduate School Dean for the Graduate Council; d) the Executive Vice President and Provost for Academic Affairs for the Academic Dean's Council; e) the Executive Vice President and Provost for Academic Affairs for senior administration of NMSU; f) the President of NMSU; g) the President of the Board of Regents; h) the New Mexico Council of Graduate Deans; i) the Academic Council of Higher Education; j) the NM Higher Education Department, and k) the NM State Board of Finance.

Approved certificate programs must be registered with the NM Higher Education Department within three months of approval. A copy of the approved proposal and the completed signature sheet must be mailed or hand delivered to the NM Higher Education Department within three months of approval. At that time a CIP code must be requested for the Certificate Program. The Certificate program can be implemented once NMSU receives the CIP code from the NM Higher Education Department. For detailed information on the NM Higher Education Department's guidelines on Certificate programs, see 5.5.2. NMAC, Approval of New Graduate Programs. The web site is provided here: <http://www.nmcpr.state.nm.us/nmac/parts/title05/05.005.0002.htm>

G. Deletion of Graduate Certificate Programs

Departments that wish to delete a certificate program must do so in writing to the Graduate School. Justification for deleting the certificate program must be included in the letter. The letter must be signed by the department head(s) and the academic dean(s) involved in course delivery. Certificate programs that have not admitted students in a three year period can be flagged for review by the Graduate Council and the Graduate School. The Graduate Council and the Graduate School can ask for a strategic plan to attract students or a letter of deletion from the departments offering the certificate program.

H. Change of Name/Title

A change of name of a certificate program must be provided within three months to the Graduate School. The new name will be submitted to the New Mexico Higher Education Department. It will also be used to update the Graduate School catalog.

I. Faculty Program Coordinator

Each certificate program must have a faculty coordinator that is the contact person for prospective students, faculty, deans and the Graduate School. The individual must be a

full-time tenure track member of the faculty of New Mexico State University. The coordinator will address academic issues, advise students and obtain faculty participation in the certificate program. The coordinator will also work with the Graduate School on issues of implementation and evaluation of the certificate program. Department heads must advise the Graduate School of changes in the personnel of this position.

J. Catalog Description of Certificate Program

A descriptive summary of the proposed certificate must be included in the proposal (name, purpose, courses and admissions requirements). It will be used in the Graduate School Catalog, and must be posted on the department web site. It will also be shared with the New Mexico Higher Education Department.

K. Continuing Education Credits

Departments may wish to offer continuing education credits as part of the certificate program. In order to do this, departments will need to contact their professional organizations and/or accrediting bodies to determine the process of obtaining approval to allow the certificate program to count towards continuing education credits.

L. Signature Sheets

Approval Form for New Graduate Certificate Programs that do not require new resources

Approval Form for New Graduate Certificate Programs that require new resources