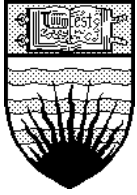


# THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA



February 15, 2008

**CURRICULUM COMMITTEE**  
**Vancouver Senate**  
2016 - 1874 East Mall  
Vancouver, B.C. Canada V6T 1Z1

To: Senate  
From: Senate Curriculum Committee  
  
Re: Policy on the Approval of Certificate Programs

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## **Policy on the Approval of Certificate Programs**

The Policy on the Approval of Certificate Programs was last considered by Senate in January 2005. The updated document presented for your consideration contains the following improvements:

- All new certificate programs are to be held to the same standard for consultations currently expected for academic programs such as degrees, specializations, and courses.
- References to the Continuing Studies Committee, dissolved in May 2006, were changed to "Senate Curriculum Committee".
- References to the Associate Vice-President of Continuing Studies were changed to "Director of Continuing Education" as per section 35 (2)(f) of the *University Act*.

**Motion:**        *"That the proposed revisions to the Policy on the Approval of Certificate Programs be approved."*

Respectfully submitted,

Peter Marshall, Chair  
Senate Curriculum Committee

# POLICY ON THE APPROVAL OF CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS

## I. Definition of a Certificate Program

1. A Certificate Program normally consists of specialized, certificate-credit courses offered at a university level. It may also draw from University degree-credit courses. Student assessment in certificate-credit courses should be consistent with University standards.
2. The program of study should be equivalent to a minimum of one-half year (approximately 150 hours) and a maximum of one-full year of University study. The hours that make up the program may include classroom study, online course work and special projects or practicum placements.
3. Minimum admission requirements should be secondary school graduation with some exceptions for mature students where appropriate records of equivalent life/work experience are provided and deemed acceptable by those evaluating admissions. Normal admission requirements may require some post-secondary education or professional work experience.

## II. Criteria for Establishment of Certificate Programs

1. A Certificate Program may be initiated only when the subject matter is appropriate to university-level teaching and research or is designed to meet the needs of specific University constituencies (e.g., Aboriginal people, Downtown Eastside residents). Programs may be developed collaboratively among academic units and Continuing Studies, or with appropriate program partners external to the University that bring added value to the Certificate Program.
2. A Certificate Program must have clearly defined educational objectives and may be oriented toward career development or achievement of professional standing.
3. A Certificate Program must be developed and maintained under the guidance of an Advisory Committee with representation from appropriate academic units as dictated by the program content. The Advisory Committee may also include representation from Continuing Studies, other academic institutions, employers, professional associations, labour groups, or others as appropriate. The Advisory Committee must consult with any academic unit affected by the proposal and include the results of that consultation with the program proposal.
4. The role of the Advisory Committee is to review the proposed Certificate Program with respect to curriculum, program format, evaluation procedures, admission criteria, assessment of internal and external resources (including library collections and student services), financial feasibility and market demand.

## III. Program Approval Process

1. The proposed Certificate Program must be approved in principle by the appropriate Dean (or his/her designate) within the academic units involved or the Director of Continuing Education. Faculties may establish their own internal approval processes in addition to those outlined in this policy.
2. Upon approval by the Advisory Committee, the full program proposal is forwarded to the academic units involved or the Director of Continuing Education, as appropriate, for approval and the summary report is forwarded to the Senate Curriculum Committee for final approval. The Curriculum Committee will normally require that a budgetary impact form and the results of any consultation be submitted with the proposal.

## IV. Program Administration and Management

1. Implementing and maintaining appropriate administrative policies and procedures, student support services, financial administration and marketing activities are the responsibility of the academic unit that has consented to administer the program. Given the experience and infrastructure within Continuing Studies, academic units are encouraged to work with Continuing Studies in this regard.
2. Admission requirements should be clearly specified for each Certificate Program, including the appropriate academic background and life/work experience required. A process for students to appeal refused entry to a program should also be specified. Each associated academic unit is responsible for upholding the rigor of the admissions process to ensure integrity and equitable treatment in the selection of students.
3. Grading systems and completion requirements should be clearly delineated for the individual courses that make up the Certificate Program and for the program as a whole. The University grading system or another system deemed appropriate for a particular program may be used, but in all cases the assessment criteria must be available for review by students applying for the program and registering in courses within the program.
4. Standards for student conduct (deportment in the classroom when relating to fellow students and instructors, appropriate use of learning technologies, etc.) must be clearly specified for each Certificate Program. Consequences of failing to uphold these standards should also be specified. Appeals should be limited to progression through three levels: instructor, program director and finally the Director of Continuing Education or Faculty Dean as appropriate.

#### V. Program Review Process

To ensure continuing quality and relevance, each Certificate Program is subject to review by Continuing Studies and/or by the academic unit offering the program within a specified time period not to exceed five years.

#### VI. Awarding of Certificates

Certificate Program graduates are not conferred a certificate by the Senate and will not attend congregation. However, program graduates will receive a certificate signed by appropriate officers of the University.

#### VII. Program Partnership Considerations

1. Certificate Programs may be offered through partnerships established between two or more academic units. The sponsoring units will determine their respective academic and administrative responsibilities. Agreements on all financial arrangements should be reached prior to program commencement.
2. Certificate Programs may also be offered via partnerships established between a UBC academic unit and one or more external organizations. The sponsoring partners will determine their respective administrative responsibilities, however primary academic responsibility must reside with the UBC academic unit that sponsors the program. Agreements on all financial arrangements should be reached prior to program commencement. Programs are awarded by the UBC academic unit, but may include reference to external sponsors through such means as sponsor logos on official documents and/or marketing materials.

#### Appendix 1. History of the 1994 Amendments to the Policy on Establishment of Certificate and Diploma Programs at the University of British Columbia

Continuing education at the University of British Columbia is offered by Continuing Studies and a number of professional faculties. The purpose of the 1994 amendments to the policy on the establishment of Certificate and Diploma Programs was to amplify the definition of University Certificate Programs approved by the Senate in 1977, and to parallel the amended policy for Diploma Programs approved by the Senate in 1994.

The 1977 policy was unclear about the role of Senate in the approval of Certificate and Diploma Programs, and focused specifically on programs that consisted entirely of degree-credit courses. The amended policy for Diploma Programs clarified the requirement of Senate approval of these programs, which are made up of mainly degree-credit courses. Under additional amendments, Certificate Programs were defined as consisting primarily of certificate-credit courses and approval was determined to rest with the academic units and Faculties. By limiting approval to the academic unit or Faculty with monitoring by the Senate Committee on Continuing Education, the revised policy responded to the need for a high level of responsiveness to the marketplace and flexibility in the development of what were often workplace-oriented programs.

It is understood in the amendments to the policy that both Continuing Studies and the Faculties are mandated to develop and offer Certificate Programs, and that the degree to which these units collaborate is subject to mutual agreement. All programs developed by Continuing Studies were deemed subject to approval by academic units or the Associate Vice-President of Continuing Studies, as appropriate. Faculties may determine their own internal policies for the approval of Certificate Programs undertaken within their auspices, and in regard to the role of member departments in the approval of programs sponsored by other Faculties or Continuing Studies.

In summary, the amendments to the 1977 policy resulted in two main changes:

1. Certificate Programs were deemed to consist primarily of certificate-credit courses. This change was based on the rationale that Continuing Studies and the Faculties are capable of developing academically rigorous certificate-credit courses offered in a format compatible with the needs of adult learners and employers. These courses may be offered at a university academic level appropriate for the Certificate Program.
2. Each Certificate Program was to be reported to Senate through the Senate Committee on Continuing Education with regular reports from Continuing Studies and the Faculties. However, Senate would not be involved in the formal approval of these programs. To ensure that academic standards and integrity are consistent with the University overall, it was determined that all programs must be approved by the academic units involved in their development and offering or the Associate Vice-President of Continuing Studies, as appropriate. In addition, Faculties could establish their own additional internal approval procedures.

Appendix 2. UBC Certificate Program Under Development: Template for a Summary Report to the Senate Curriculum Committee

Proposed Name of Certificate Program:

Date of Submission:

Sponsoring Faculty/Department/School:

Contact Person:

Name

Title

Telephone

Email

Supporting UBC Partners or External Partners:

Program Description (*maximum 250 words*):

Rationale for the Program (*maximum 250 words*):

Proposed Length/Duration (*indicate hours, credits, months, etc.*):

Proposed Curriculum Topics (*list by brief descriptive titles only*):

Target Learners:

Student Admission Criteria:

Student Assessment/Grading Methods:

Program Delivery Format:

Marketing/Promotion Strategy:

Assessment of Impact on Departmental and University Resources:

Assessment of Financial Viability:

Current Program Advisory Committee Members (*list names and affiliations*):

Final Approval Expected from the Following Deans/Department Heads:

### Appendix 3. Checklist for Establishing Certificate Programs

(Important note: for full details, see the Policy on Approval of Certificate Programs)

A UBC Certificate Program must:

- have clearly defined educational objectives and subject matter appropriate to university-level teaching and research
- consist of specialized, certificate-credit courses or university degree-credit courses
- represent the equivalent of approximately 150-300 hours of study, which may include classroom or online course work, special projects or practicum placements
- have clear admission requirements of secondary school graduation, post-secondary education or life/work experience, as well as a process for appeals
- have clear grading systems and completion requirements for individual courses and for the program as a whole, as well as documentation of same for review by students
- have clear standards for student conduct and specify the consequences of failing to uphold these standards
- receive approval in principle by the appropriate Dean (or designate) within the academic units involved or the Director of Continuing Education
- be developed and maintained under the guidance of an Advisory Committee made up of representatives from appropriate academic units and members of the community
- receive approval by the Advisory Committee, as well as the academic units involved or the Director of Continuing Education, as appropriate
- receive approval of the Senate Curriculum Committee
- be subject to review by Continuing Studies and/or by the academic unit(s) offering the program within a specified time period not to exceed five years; and
- be offered by one or more academic units or Continuing Studies, or by either in partnership with one or more appropriate external organizations