

UNIVERSITY COUNCIL  
ACADEMIC PROGRAMS COMMITTEE  
REQUEST FOR DECISION

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**PRESENTED BY:** Terry Wotherspoon, chair, Academic Programs Committee

**DATE OF MEETING:** November 16, 2017

**SUBJECT:** Certificates and Diplomas Guidelines

**DECISION REQUESTED:**

It is recommended:

*That Council approve the Certificate Guidelines, and that the recommended name changes be reflected in the Nomenclature Report, effective immediately.*

**PURPOSE:**

Council has authority over degree and degree-level programs, including the approval of certificate and diploma programs. Due to a recent increase in the number of certificates and diplomas, guidelines have been developed to help guide colleges and schools as they work to develop new and innovative program offerings.

**CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND:**

In 2015 a joint subcommittee of members from the Academic Programs Committee and the Planning and Priorities Committee was formed to better understand the roles that certificates and diplomas play at the University of Saskatchewan.

Concerns had been raised both at Council and in APC of a perceived proliferation of new certificate and diploma programs, as the number of certificate and diploma programs has risen from nine in 2012 to 29 in 2017. Additionally, a number of colleges had been establishing academic regulations to ensure consistency in their certificate and diploma programming.

Throughout 2015 and 2016, the subcommittee conducted a review of how certificates and diplomas are utilized at other Canadian institutions. In doing this review, it became clear that the number of certificates and diplomas at the U of S is modest in comparison to our U15 peers and that there is great disparity in the intensity and length of the programs. At the same time, a review was done of the nature of certificates and diplomas offered at the U of S, and the variety and intensity of offerings at the U of S are represented in the Certificate and Diploma Guidelines attached.

Following from the work of the subcommittee, a Certificate and Diploma Handbook (attached) was developed. After consultation with APC and Planning and Priorities

throughout 2017, it was determined that high-level university-wide guidelines would benefit the campus community.

**IMPLICATIONS:**

The guidelines attached are to guide colleges and schools as they develop new certificate and diploma offerings. The guidelines are not prescriptive and are not meant to place restrictions on colleges and schools as they develop new academic programs, but are meant to demonstrate current practice at the U of S with regards to naming, admissions, and the intensity and length of the proposed program.


A note that the names included in the Certificate and Diploma Guidelines reflect a new naming convention, as the previous naming convention did not clearly delineate which programs were degree-level and which did not carry academic weight.

**CONSULTATION:**

The Certificates Subcommittee met a number of times between March 2015 and December 2016 to develop the Certificate and Diploma Handbook and once that was developed, the Office of the Registrar refined the work into the Certificate Guidelines as presented. Consultation occurred with the Academic Programs committee numerous times (November 16, 2016; May 5, 2017; and October 25, 2017) and with Planning and Priorities Committee on September 13, 2017.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Certificate and Diploma Guidelines
2. Proposed changes to Nomenclature Report
3. Certificate and Diploma Handbook (for information)




**TO:** Academic Programs Committee of Council  
**FROM:** Russell Isinger, University Registrar  
**SUBJECT:** Certificates and Diplomas – Proposal to Revise Nomenclature and Provide Guidelines  
**DATE:** October 19, 2017

Dear colleagues,

The last several years have seen a growth in certificate and diploma programming across the country. At the U of S, 9 out of 16 colleges currently offer at least one certificate or diploma program, and the total number of these programs has more than tripled over the last 5 years, rising from 9 in 2012 to 29 in 2017. Alongside this interest, several colleges have established academic regulations to ensure consistency in their certificate and diploma programming. Most notably, the College of Arts & Science formalized their certificate regulations in 2012 by securing University Council approval of a “Certificate of Proficiency Program Template.” Although the Academic and Curricular Nomenclature document defines characteristics for both program types at a high level, no specific university-wide regulations have been established.

Recognizing the need to better understand the roles that certificates and diplomas play at the U of S, the Academic Programs Committee (APC) and the Planning & Priorities Committee (PPC) formed a joint sub-committee on certificate programs in 2015. Under direction from the sub-committee, Registrarial Services was tasked with conducting a survey of certificate and diploma programming offered at the U of S in the 2016-17 academic calendar year. The data was compiled and presented to APC on November 16, 2016, along with the results of a survey of U15 universities that had been conducted by the Office of the Vice-Provost, Teaching and Learning earlier that year. The results of both surveys confirm that certificates serve a variety of academic and professional functions, depending upon the disciplinary field. Recognizing that each college possesses unique goals, the APC recommended that a set of guidelines, rather than regulations, be developed. These guidelines would provide general consistency across campus, while allowing the flexibility necessary for colleges to offer certificates and diplomas that best enhance the degree programming in their respective fields.

Under University Council’s authority, the registrar is responsible for administering academic programming in an orderly manner; this includes categorizing programs in such a way that is



meaningful to both the campus community and the wider national context. With this mandate, Registrarial Services has identified a set of characteristics common to certificates and diplomas offered across the U of S. When paired with the Academic and Curricular Nomenclature definitions, we hope this data will serve as a set of guidelines for colleges as they develop their curricula. Terminology changes are also suggested to more accurately reflect the level of learning required for each certificate and diploma program type at the U of S. It should be noted that the College of Arts & Science “Certificate of Proficiency Program Template” has been used as a model for the proposed guidelines.

Yours respectfully,



University Registrar

## Certificate and Diploma Guidelines

Certificate and diploma programs have become increasingly recognized for their ability to create exceptional learning opportunities. These programs satisfy a variety of functions at the U of S, including providing students with specialized and professional skills, encouraging postgraduate study, providing opportunities to ladder into degree programming, facilitating unique interdisciplinary opportunities, and generally encouraging a population of life-long learners. While the value of this variety has been acknowledged, the need for a set of guidelines has also been identified. The following document outlines terminology, policies, and key programmatic features associated with certificate and diploma programs at the U of S. Taken together, these components are intended to function as a set of guidelines, rather than a prescriptive template. Faculty are encouraged to consider this information as they develop certificate and diploma programs that enhance their degree programming and satisfy the unique needs of their colleges.

For information on all aspects of the approval of certificate and diploma programs, including the admission requirements and tuition rates, please consult the Academic and Curricular Changes Authority Chart: [http://www.usask.ca/secretariat/governing-bodies/council/committee/academic\\_programs/index.php](http://www.usask.ca/secretariat/governing-bodies/council/committee/academic_programs/index.php)

These guidelines apply to all levels of certificates and diplomas offered by the U of S. These programs are defined as follows:

***Degree Level Certificate*** Under the authority of University Council and the Academic Programs Committee, these certificates signify the completion of a recognized program of degree-level courses and imply the attainment of a degree-level standard of proficiency, achievement, or promotion. These programs may be completed alongside a degree program, or as a stand-alone program. Programs in this category are classified as follows:

- Certificate (Cert.)
- Post-Degree Certificate (P.D.C.)
- Postgraduate Degree Specialization Certificates (P.G.D.S.C.)

***Degree Level Diploma*** Under the authority of University Council and the Academic Programs Committee, these programs include degree-level courses, and completion implies the attainment of a university-level standard of achievement which is fully transferable into certain degree-level programs.

- Diploma (Dipl.)
- Postgraduate Diplomas (P.G.D.)

***Non-Degree Level Certificate*** These programs are approved by the vice-president academic & provost following consultation with the registrar and the Academic Programs Committee. This term is used to signify the successful completion of a course or program of courses appropriate for post-secondary training but not classified as degree-level courses. The topics covered in these courses may be similar to topics covered in degree-level courses, but the distinguishing features are normally differences in the breadth and depth of understanding required for successful completion. Implies the attainment of a standard of proficiency, achievement or promotion appropriate for post-secondary training. Non-degree level certificates not under the authority of a college shall fall under the authority of an identified administrative unit.



**Community Level Certificate** These programs are approved by the vice-provost, teaching and learning or the dean of a college, after consultation with the provost & vice-president (academic). This term is used to certify satisfactory attendance at a community-level, non-academic course or program of courses sponsored by vice-provost, teaching and learning or a college at the university. It does not imply attainment of a standard of proficiency, achievement or promotion, and is comprised of non-academic courses numbered 001-009.

**Certificate and Diploma Programs Framework:**

Level of Study	Program(s)	Admission Requirements	Course Numbering
Community Level	Community Level Certificate	None	Generally include 001-009
Undergraduate Non-Degree Level	Non-Degree Level Certificate	High School Completion	Generally include 010-099
Graduate Non-Degree Level	Non-Degree Level Certificate	Must meet minimum graduate-level admission requirements	Generally include 800 and/or 900-level
Undergraduate Degree Level	-Degree Level Certificate -Degree Level Diploma	Must meet minimum undergraduate-level admission requirements	Generally include 100-499 levels
Post-Degree Undergraduate Level	Post-Degree Certificate	Completion of undergraduate degree is required for admission	Generally include 100-599 levels; majority of courses often fall within 500-level range
Graduate Degree Level	-Degree Level Certificate -Postgraduate Diploma	Must meet minimum graduate-level admission requirements	Generally include 800-level
Postgraduate Degree Level	Postgraduate Degree Specialization Certificate	Completion of graduate degree is required for admission	Generally include 800-level



## University of Saskatchewan Certificate and Diplomas – Current Practices

	Course Numbers	Credit Units	Admission Requirements	Academic Standards	Transcripts	Convocation
<b>Community Level Certificate</b>	Course numbers are 001 - 009	No specified credit unit amount	Open admission	Not accepted for credit toward any certificate or degree	Not listed on transcripts	Not awarded at Convocation Ceremony
<b>Undergraduate Non-Degree Level Certificate</b>	Course numbers are 010 - 099	Range of 15 - 30 non-degree level credit units	High school diploma required for admission	Majority of courses are at the non-degree level. No capstone course requirement.	Listed on transcripts	Awarded at Convocation Ceremony
<b>Degree Level Certificate (Undergraduate)</b>	Course numbers are 100 - 499	<p>Range of 15 - 30 degree-level credit units</p> <p>Rationale: 15 credit units are equivalent to one full term of courses; 30 credit units are equivalent to two full terms of courses. The program can be completed in one year.</p>	Must meet minimum admission requirements for the college of ownership	Credit units for the program include necessary prerequisite courses. Students must pass all courses of the program according to approved grading system, promotion and graduation standards. Inclusion of senior-level (200-level or above) capstone or core course (to ensure that the program provides a distinct set of learning objectives and is not just a collection of courses). May be pursued as stand-alone program or concurrent with degree program.	Listed on transcripts	Awarded at Convocation Ceremony
<b>Degree-Level Diploma (Undergraduate)</b>	Course numbers 100 – 499	Minimum of 60 credit units (equivalent to two full years of courses)	Must meet minimum admission requirements for the college of ownership	Credit units for the program include necessary prerequisite courses. Students must pass all courses of the program according to approved grading system, promotion and graduation standards. Courses often ladder into undergraduate degree-level programming.	Listed on transcripts	Awarded at Convocation Ceremony



	Course Numbers	Credit Units	Admission Requirements	Academic Standards	Transcripts	Convocation
<b>Post-Degree Certificate (Undergraduate)</b>	Courses are numbered at the undergraduate level (100-599 levels). Usually, a majority of courses are numbered at the 500-level.	Range of 15 - 30 degree-level credit units  Rationale: 15 credit units are equivalent to one full term of courses; 30 credit units are equivalent to two full terms of courses. The program can be completed in one year.	Must have completed an undergraduate degree for admission	Students must pass all courses of the program according to approved grading system, promotion and graduation standards. Inclusion of senior-level capstone or core course (to ensure that the program provides a distinct set of learning objectives and is not just a collection of courses).	Listed on transcripts	Awarded at Convocation Ceremony
<b>Graduate Non-Degree Level Certificate</b>	Courses are generally numbered at the 800 and 900-levels, but carry 0 credit units	Courses are generally numbered at the 800 and 900-levels, but carry 0 credit units	Must meet minimum graduate-level admission requirements	Must be taken concurrently with degree program.	Listed on transcripts	Awarded at Convocation Ceremony
<b>Degree Level Certificate (Graduate)</b>	Comprised of 800-level courses	Range of 6-9 credit units	Must meet minimum graduate-level admission requirements	May be pursued as stand-alone program or concurrent with degree program. Students must pass all courses of the program according to approved grading system, promotion and graduation standards.	Listed on transcripts	Awarded at Convocation Ceremony





	Course Numbers	Credit Units	Admission Requirements	Academic Standards	Transcripts	Convocation
<b>Postgraduate Diploma (Graduate)</b>	Comprised of 800-level courses	Minimum of 30 credit units, at least 18 credit units at the 800 level in the same field of study	Must meet minimum graduate-level admission requirements	Research is not a basic part of such programs, although candidates in some fields may be given the opportunity to become acquainted with research techniques. Students must pass all the courses of an approved program with a grade of at least 60% in each course and an average of at least 65% for all courses.	Listed on transcripts	Awarded at Convocation Ceremony
<b>Postgraduate Degree Specialization Certificate (Graduate)</b>	Comprised of 800-level courses	Minimum of 26 credit units	Completion of graduate-level degree	Specialized postgraduate professional training programs. Designed to emphasize areas of competence in a particular field. Students must pass all courses of the program according to approved grading system, promotion and graduation standards.	Listed on transcripts	Awarded at Convocation Ceremony

### Related Documents

Academic and Curricular Changes Authority Chart: [http://www.usask.ca/secretariat/governing-bodies/council/committee/academic\\_programs/index.php](http://www.usask.ca/secretariat/governing-bodies/council/committee/academic_programs/index.php)

Academic and Curricular Nomenclature: <http://www.usask.ca/secretariat/documents/nomenclature.php>

Academic Courses Policy: <http://policies.usask.ca/policies/academic-affairs/academic-courses.php>

Arts & Science Template for Certificate of Proficiency, University Council November 15, 2012: attached

## Proposal to Revise Certificate and Diploma Nomenclature:

It is recommended that Council approve revised nomenclature for certificate and diploma programs, and that the revisions be incorporated into the next update of the U of S Academic and Curricular Nomenclature document. The following highlights the proposed revisions in red:

***Degree Level Certificate ~~Certificates of Proficiency~~*** Under the authority of University Council and the Academic Programs Committee, these certificates signify the completion of a recognized program of degree-level courses and imply the attainment of a degree-level standard of proficiency, achievement, or promotion. Undergraduate programs in this category include certificates and post-degree certificates; graduate programs in this category include certificates, and postgraduate degree specialization certificates. These programs may be completed alongside a degree program, or as a stand-alone program.

***Degree Level Diploma ~~Diplomas of Proficiency~~*** Under the authority of University Council and the Academic Programs Committee, these programs include degree-level courses, and completion implies the attainment of a university-level standard of achievement which is fully transferable into certain undergraduate degree-level programs.

***Non-Degree Level Certificate ~~Certificate of Successful Completion~~*** These programs are approved by the vice-president academic & provost following consultation with the registrar and the Academic Programs Committee. This term is used to signify the successful completion of a course or program of courses appropriate for post-secondary training but not classified as degree-level courses. The topics covered in these courses may be similar to topics covered in degree-level courses, but the distinguishing features are normally differences in the breadth and depth of understanding required for successful completion. Implies the attainment of a standard of proficiency, achievement or promotion appropriate for post-secondary training. ***Non-Degree Level Certificates ~~Certificates of successful completion~~*** not under the authority of a college shall fall under the authority of an identified administrative unit.

***Community Level Certificate ~~Certificate of Attendance~~*** These programs are approved by the vice-provost, teaching and learning or the dean of a college, after consultation with the provost & vice-president (academic). This term is used to certify satisfactory attendance at a community-level, non-academic course or program of courses sponsored by vice-provost, teaching and learning or a college at the university. It does not imply attainment of a standard of proficiency, achievement or promotion, and is comprised of non-academic courses numbered 001-009.

## College of Arts and Science

### Certificate of Proficiency Program Requirements

*Approved by University Council, November 15, 2012*

1. Minimum of 15 credit units and a maximum of 30 credit units of courses that count for credit in the College of Arts & Science. Credit units required for the program must include any necessary prerequisite courses.
2. Residency requirement: Students must complete at the University of Saskatchewan at least half of the total required credit units, rounded to the nearest highest multiple of 3 credit units.
3. Graduation standard: Minimum C.W.A. of 62.5% in all courses attempted which credit toward the Certificate.
4. Each certificate program must have a capstone or core course, which must be at the 200-level or above.

#### Rationale for above requirements:

1. Minimum of 15 credit units:

- Equivalent to one full term of courses

Maximum of 30 credit units:

- Allows a certificate to potentially be earned in one full year of study (though if there is a capstone course this may require block offerings or that the capstone course be offered in May-June)

2. Residency requirement of half of the credit units aligns with existing requirement for degree programs within the College. All University of Saskatchewan courses taken, whether offered on campus, online, or through partnerships with regional colleges, are counted toward this requirement. As only University of Saskatchewan courses are used to calculate the graduation average, this ensures that at least 9 credit units are used in this calculation.

3. The graduation standard of 62.5% aligns with the minimum graduation average required in the major subject for all disciplinary and most interdisciplinary Three-year and Four-year programs (subject average in the major). As the courses counted in a certificate program will all contribute to the selected learning outcomes, similar to those in a major, the subject average is considered to be the appropriate parallel.

All courses attempted which may credit toward the certificate will be used in the calculation of the graduation average. In some cases this may mean that more than the minimum number of credit units will be included. This aligns with the College practice for calculating subject and overall averages. This procedure is followed to disallow the opportunity to choose only the highest grades, which advantages students who have the means to take additional courses.

4. Each certificate program must have a capstone or core course. This requirement is designed to ensure that the program provides a complete learning piece (distinct set of learning objectives). The capstone or core course must be at the 200-level or above. A capstone course should require one or more of the courses that credit to the certificate as a prerequisite/co-requisite. A core course may be taken concurrently with other courses used for the program, and will focus on key learning objectives of the program.