

Policy on Credit Certificates

(Approved 5/5/2022)

The primary responsibility of the University is to provide educational experiences leading to a baccalaureate, master's or doctoral degree. It also provides education for professional licenses or credentials offered by off-campus authorities.

In addition, the University offers coursework which serves a more specialized purpose, but which is of significant value to individuals. To encourage the development of these programs, and to recognize the individuals who complete them, the University has approved the following policy governing the issuance of credit certificates. University and Professional Specialization certificates consist of formally constructed and approved areas of study designed to meet requirements for professional competence, expand access to specialized knowledge, and meet occupational needs for advanced interdisciplinary work. Certificates attest to the acquisition of specialized knowledge and skills in particular academic, professional or service areas.

I. Types of Certificates

The University authorizes the issuance of two types of credit certificates:

1. The University Certificate
2. Professional Specialization Certificate

All certificates bearing the name of the University shall be one of these two types. Furthermore, no member of the University faculty, administration, or staff other than those who are authorized, as outlined in this document, shall issue a certificate bearing the University name; or the name of any of the University's colleges, departments, units, or study centers; or the University logo. The Office of Graduate Studies awards all certificates with accredited courses.

II. The University Certificate

Students may earn a University Certificate in recognition of satisfactory completion of a planned sequence of courses at the graduate or 400-level upper division courses approved for graduate credit in accordance with the following:

- A. University Certificate programs shall be designed for post-baccalaureate students.
- B. The program shall consist of at least 15 graduate or 400-level upper division accredited units specified for the program.
- C. Any prerequisites for the courses in the program shall be clearly stated.
- D. No more than 25 percent of the units required for the program shall be transfer units. The program coordinator will evaluate all transfer units.
- E. Students may not earn more than 6 units in the program through internships or independent study.
- F. All credit courses in the program shall be graded in the traditional manner (e.g., A through F), except for those courses that are offered only on a Credit/No Credit basis.
- G. A University Certificate program shall not infringe upon existing degree or credential programs. A graduate degree program may have an embedded University Certificate(s).
- H. A student must complete the University Certificate program within 5 years after acceptance to the program or enrollment in courses credited to the program. Departments may make an exception to this rule if the student is pursuing a degree at Northridge in conjunction with the certificate program in question.

To read more about the creation, approval, and related business practices of sustaining University Certificate programs, please see the [Graduate Studies Committee](#) website.

Admission to University Certificate Programs

University policies and requirements for admission to graduate study as established for graduate degree programs also apply to students pursuing a University Certificate.

- New students applying for admission to University Certificate Programs must submit the Graduate Application for Admission to the University. Students must hold a bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited institution and provide all transcripts from institutions attended.
- Continuing post-baccalaureate students must submit a request for a Change of Objective form to the Office of Graduate Studies.

- Only students who meet University and graduate department admission requirements for post-baccalaureate standing will be considered. This includes submission of acceptable TOEFL scores for international students.

University Certificate Program Requirements

- A University Certificate Program form must be filed with the Office of Graduate Studies at the end of the semester the certificate is completed.
- Traditional letter grades are required in all courses taken except as noted above.
- Course credit must be earned through regular or extended learning enrollment at California State University, Northridge.
- No more than 9 units of the certificate program may be transferred for the completion of any other degree/program.
- Units taken towards a graduate certificate may be applied to a graduate degree with prior permission of the graduate program.

Application and Eligibility for Certificates

- Candidates are eligible for the certificate when approved by the coordinator and upon completion of the program within a 5-year period with a minimum grade point average of 3.0 (a “B” average) in the program coursework. Grades below a “C” and grades of “I”, or “RP/SP” are not permitted toward the certificate.
- A completed University Certificate Program form must be filed with the Office of Graduate Studies after all coursework has been completed. Following review, the form is returned to the certificate program coordinator for signature. The Office of Graduate Studies will update SOLAR so that the certificate appears on the student transcript.

Approval of New Certificate Programs

All new University Certificate programs are reviewed under the prevailing processes required for new degree programs. Review and approval by the Graduate Studies Committee is required.

III. Professional Specialization Certificate

Students may earn a Professional Specialization Certificate in recognition of satisfactory completion of a planned sequence of courses at the graduate or 400-level upper division courses approved for graduate credit in accordance with the following:

- A. Professional Specialization Certificate programs shall be designed for post-baccalaureate students.
- B. The program shall consist of a minimum of 6 units and a maximum of 14 units of graduate or 400-level upper division accredited units specified for the program.
- C. Any prerequisites for the courses in the program shall be clearly stated.
- D. No more than 25 percent of the units required for the program shall be transfer units. The program coordinator will evaluate all transfer units.
- E. Students may not earn more than 6 units in the program through internships or independent study.
- F. All credit courses in the program shall be graded in the traditional manner (e.g., A through F), except for those courses that are offered only on a Credit/No Credit basis.
- G. A Professional Specialization Certificate program shall not infringe upon existing degree or credential programs. A graduate degree program may have an embedded Professional Specialization Certificate(s).
- H. A student must complete the Professional Specialization Certificate program within 5 years after acceptance to the program or enrollment in courses credited to the program. Departments may make an exception to this rule if the student is pursuing a degree at Northridge in conjunction with the certificate program in question.

To read more about the creation, approval, and related business practices of sustaining Professional Specialization Certificate programs, please see the [Graduate Studies Committee](#) website.

Admission to Professional Specialization Certificate Programs

University policies and requirements for admission to graduate study as established for graduate degree programs also apply to students pursuing a professional specialization certificate.

- New students applying for admission to Professional Specialization Certificate Programs must submit the [Graduate Application for Admission to the University](#).

Students must hold a bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited institution and provide all transcripts from institutions attended.

- Continuing post-baccalaureate students must submit a request for a [Change of Objective](#) form to the Office of Graduate Studies.
- Only students who meet University and graduate department admission requirements for post-baccalaureate standing will be considered. This includes submission of acceptable [TOEFL scores](#) for international students.

Professional Specialization Certificate Program Requirements

- A Professional Specialization Certificate Program form must be filed with the Office of Graduate Studies at the end of the semester the certificate is completed.
- Traditional letter grades are required in all courses taken except as noted above.
- Course credit must be earned through regular or extended learning enrollment at California State University, Northridge.
- No more than 9 units of the certificate program may be transferred for the completion of any other degree/program.
- Units taken towards a graduate certificate may be applied to a graduate degree with prior permission of the graduate program.

Application and Eligibility for Certificates

- Candidates are eligible for the certificate when approved by the coordinator and upon completion of the program within a 5-year period with a minimum grade point average of 3.0 (a "B" average) in the program coursework. Grades below a "C" and grades of "I", or "RP/SP" are not permitted toward the certificate.
- A completed Professional Specialization Certificate Program form must be filed with the Office of Graduate Studies after all coursework has been completed. Following review, the form is returned to the certificate program coordinator for signature. The Graduate Studies office will update SOLAR so that the certificate appears on the student transcript.

Approval of New Certificate Programs

All new Professional Specialization certificate programs are reviewed under the prevailing processes required for new degree programs. Review and approval by the Graduate Studies Committee is required.