

**CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, NORTHRIDGE**  
**POLICY ON CERTIFICATES**  
(Approved May 25, 2009)

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 certificates. University and Advanced Professional Development 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 three types of certificates:

1. The University Certificate (Credit)
2. The Certificate in Advanced Professional Development (Non-credit)
3. The Certificate of Participation

All certificates bearing the name of the University shall be one of these three 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 seal; or the University logo.

Before considering the development of a certificate program, carefully review both this policy and the attached document, "Basic Principles for the Creation of Certificate Programs."

**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 upper division undergraduate levels designed and approved in accordance with the following:

- A. University Certificate programs generally shall be designed for post-baccalaureate students.
- B. The program shall consist of at least 15 graduate or upper division semester units specified for the program.
- C. Any prerequisites for the courses in the program shall be clearly stated.
- D. No more than twenty-five 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 four semester units (or the equivalent) 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 five 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.

I. Approval of the program's curriculum shall follow standard University curricular procedures. Approval by the graduate studies committee of the Faculty Senate and the provost and vice-president for academic affairs is required.

J. The dean of the appropriate college will coordinate the approved program. In turn, the dean in consultation with the relevant chair(s) will designate a faculty member to take responsibility for implementing the program.

K. As an additional step, the University Certificate programs that envision self-support funding should be planned by the relevant academic college and/or department in collaboration with The Tseng College of Extended Learning and must be approved for self-support financing by the dean of The Tseng College of Extended Learning.

L. The provost and vice president for academic affairs or designee will review University Certificate programs every five years, or earlier, if necessary. The office of the provost will be responsible for tracking the creation of certificate programs, the review schedule for each, and the results of the program review so that the history of each certificate program and the outcome of reviews can be considered by subsequent review committees. The department chair or the dean of the college offering the program, the graduate studies committee, or the associate vice president of graduate studies, research and international programs, may identify a need for a University Certificate program review and/or recommend termination of a University Certificate program.

If the graduate studies committee recommends termination of a University Certificate program, existing procedures for the termination of academic degree programs will be followed.

M. All literature published and circulated in connection with the program shall have the prior approval of both the appropriate college dean, and the provost and vice president of academic affairs. Approved descriptions of programs may be included in the University catalog. When the certificate is issued, it may bear the seal of the University.

### **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/Postbaccalaureate Application for Admission to the university accompanied by prior degrees and scores on appropriate standardized tests.
- Continuing postbaccalaureate students must submit a request for a Change of Objective form to the Graduate Studies Office.
- Only students who meet Graduate Studies admission requirements for post-baccalaureate standing will be considered. This includes submission of acceptable TOEFL scores for international students.
- Upon recommendation of the certificate program faculty, successful applicants will be admitted to classified postbaccalaureate standing.

### **University Certificate Program Requirements**

- A Certificate Program form must be filed with the Office of Graduate Studies no later than the student's second semester of study.
- 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.
- Additional graduate-level units may be double counted toward a graduate degree with prior permission of the graduate program.

### **Application and Eligibility for Certificates**

- An application for the award of a University Certificate must be filed no later than the first two weeks of the semester or term in which the program is to be completed.
- Candidates are eligible for the certificate when recommended by the faculty certificate 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", "RP/SP", or "RD" 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 Graduate Studies office 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. The Certificate In Advanced Professional Development**

Students may earn The Tseng College of Extended Learning Program Certificate in Advanced Professional Development in recognition of satisfactory completion of a planned sequence of not-for-credit courses and workshops designed and approved in accordance with the following:

- A. The program shall consist of at least one hundred hours of instruction (or the equivalent) specified for the program.
- B. All requirements for the certificate program shall be clearly identified and announced.
- C. Courses in the program shall be graded in the traditional manner (e.g., A through F). Even though graded, these courses cannot be transferred to graduate and credential programs.
- D. A 2.5 minimum overall GPA is required in the certificate program for an Advanced Professional Development program. However, certificate programs may set higher standards.
- E. Criteria for assessment of satisfactory performance in the program must be stipulated at the time program approval is sought.
- F. A time limit not to exceed five years shall exist for completion of all certificate requirements. Programs may set shorter time limits for completion.
- G. Programs may be proposed by departments, colleges, institutes, centers, or by the dean of The Tseng College of Extended Learning. When programs contain a distinct departmental orientation, the dean of The Tseng College of Extended Learning will consult with the department and college concerned. All proposals shall be reviewed by The Tseng College of Extended Learning Committee prior to approval by the dean of The Tseng College of Extended Learning.
- H. The dean of The Tseng College of Extended Learning shall designate an appropriate individual as coordinator of an approved program.
- I. The office of the provost and vice president of academic affairs working with The Tseng College of Extended Learning will review all certificate programs every five years or earlier if necessary.
- J. All literature published and circulated in connection with the program shall have the prior approval of the dean of The Tseng College of Extended Learning. Descriptions of approved programs are not authorized for inclusion in the University catalog, but may be announced in brochures or schedules prepared by The Tseng College of Extended Learning. With the approval of the provost and vice president of academic affairs and the graduate studies committee, web site links to such programs may be inserted in the electronic University catalog.
- K. The Tseng College of Extended Learning shall develop and circulate procedures for processing applications for certificates and arranging for issuance.

#### **IV. The Certificate of Participation**

A Certificate of Participation may be awarded in recognition of any of a wide variety of educational experiences sponsored by some segment of the University. Such certificates are not meant to connote any specific level of competence and may not be designed or used for such purpose. The rules governing the issuance of such a certificate bearing the University's name or the name of any of its colleges, departments, units, or study centers, are as follows:

- A. The certificate shall not bear the University seal.
- B. Certificates shall not be awarded for completion of regular University credit courses individually or in clusters.
- C. All wording on the certificate should be such that there is no implication of any kind that the University by issuing this kind of certificate is attesting to any level of skills gained or educational achievement.
- D. Requests to issue a Certificate of Participation shall be reviewed and approved by the head of the relevant sponsoring unit (dean for academic units and relevant vice president for other administrative units).
- E. Approved Certificates of Participation apply only to the specific experience or time period approved.