

Revision of Board of Governors' Statute 2.43.12 on Guidelines for Undergraduate Certificates

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board of Governors revise Statute 2.43.12 on Guidelines for Undergraduate Certificates effective fall semester 2022. This statute is related to the number and type of credits required for a certificate, as well as the timeline for awarding an earned certificate.

Rationale for Proposed Changes

In alignment with the proposal to accept additional transfer credit for students from two-year institutions towards a baccalaureate degree, we propose to allow students the ability to apply transfer credit for up to half of the credit requirement for a certificate. Currently, the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences allows transfer credit to apply towards a minor; this proposal brings the application of transfer credit for certificate programs into line with policy for major and minor allowances.

We recommend reducing the minimum number of credits for a certificate from 15 to 12 to increase the opportunity for academic programs to determine appropriate requirements for each certificate and potentially make pursuit of a certificate more appealing to prospective students. A 12-credit minimum requirement also aligns with the policies at some of our peer institutions, allowing WSU to be competitive in recruiting students to these certificate programs. Programs will be able to set requirements at higher than 12 credits if appropriate for a particular certificate.

We recommend removing the requirement that all certificate courses be at the 3000-6000 level in recognition that some programs may wish to include entry level material in the progression of their certificate content. This also allows for the creation of lower division certificates that can be used to incentivize taking lower-division courses here at Wayne State as part of their general education program or, where appropriate, in the foundational phase of degree programs with extensive program-level requirements.

We also recommend awarding the certificate to a student at the time it is completed rather than holding it for award at the time of undergraduate degree completion. Several of our peer public institutions award certificates at completion as we wish to do. This will allow students to earn credentials along the way towards a baccalaureate degree that can support immediate employment opportunities and help students maintain momentum on their degree path by providing an intermediate milestone.

Current Statute Language Regarding Undergraduate Certificates

The current Board of Governors statute 2.43.12 outlines Guidelines for Undergraduate Certificate Programs. These guidelines include that students must have completed at least 60 credits and a grade point average of 2.0 or above to enroll in a certificate program or have previously completed a baccalaureate degree. Section 2.43.12.050 notes that undergraduate certificate programs must consist of at least 15 credits of advanced coursework and no transfer credit may apply. Students who have completed an undergraduate degree may apply 9 previously earned credits towards a certificate. Current undergraduate certificates are awarded upon completion of the bachelor's program.

Proposed Statute Revision

The recommended revised text of the statute is presented in its entirety below.

2.43.12 Guidelines for Undergraduate Certificates

2.43.12.010

An Undergraduate Certificate Program is for students who are currently enrolled in undergraduate coursework or who have previously earned an undergraduate degree and who would like to add a certification to their current or past degree program. The Certificate Program may be within a single discipline or multidisciplinary and is designed to provide students with specialized knowledge that is less extensive than an undergraduate major. These programs may be directed at three groups of individuals: 1) WSU undergraduate students pursuing a major in a related field; 2) WSU undergraduate students pursuing a major in another department; and 3) students who have previously earned a baccalaureate level degree at Wayne State or another institution and want a further concentration in a related field.

2.43.12.020

Specific guidelines for an Undergraduate Certificate Program are:

2.43.12.030

Program proposals shall include description, curriculum, admission requirements, rationale, resource requirements, budget, program standards, and evaluation plans for the proposed program.

2.43.12.040

The program shall be open to regularly admitted Wayne State University undergraduate students who ~~have completed at least 60 credit hours and have a grade point average of 2.0 or above~~ are in good academic standing. The program shall also be open to students who have previously earned a baccalaureate level degree at Wayne State or another institution. Individual Undergraduate Certificate Programs may set higher admissions standards or other requirements for eligibility.

2.43.12.050

The program shall consist of at least ~~15~~ 12 semester credits of ~~advanced~~ courses at the undergraduate level (~~3000 to 6000 level~~). ~~All credits must be earned at Wayne State. No transfer credits can be applied.~~ No more than half of the required credits for a certificate may come from transfer credit. Students who have completed their bachelor's degree may apply up to 9 credits to the Undergraduate Certificate requirements at the discretion of the ~~department~~ degree program.

2.43.12.060

The curriculum should focus on content and skills ~~that are at an advanced undergraduate level~~ under a readily recognizable theme. Where appropriate, the courses and/or curriculum should include projects and reports of an integrative, design, or research nature.

2.43.12.070

A minimum grade point average of 2.0 must be achieved for courses in the particular certificate program to obtain an Undergraduate Certificate. Students must have completed ~~identified~~ specified prerequisites for each course in order to register for that course.

2.43.12.080

The Certificate Program will be comprised only of undergraduate-level courses. ~~Up to 12~~ All of the credit hours of coursework taken toward a student's first Undergraduate Certificate an Undergraduate Certificate may also be used to satisfy undergraduate degree requirements. Additional Undergraduate Certificates for a particular student will require all certificate credits to be in addition to ~~the undergraduate degree requirements~~ other Undergraduate Certificates. That is, students may not use a single course to satisfy a requirement in two different Undergraduate Certificates. Credits applied to an Undergraduate Certificate cannot be applied toward a subsequent Wayne State University graduate degree.

2.43.12.090

Undergraduate Certificates will be awarded ~~upon completion of the related bachelor's program. Or, if the student already has been awarded the bachelor's degree, the certificate will be awarded~~ upon completion of the certificate program.

2.43.12.100

The program should utilize existing courses, facilities, and resources to the extent possible.

2.43.12.110

The usual University approval procedures shall be followed in establishing such programs.

Approvals

This recommendation was approved by the Academic Senate and the Provost.