VWU Certificate Program Criteria

A *certificate* is defined as *a document attesting completion of related courses in an area of specialized knowledge.*

Policies for developing and seeking approval of certificate programs:

1. A certificate requires the completion of a fixed number of credit hours, no fewer than 12.

2. A certificate requires that students earn a grade average of C or higher in certificate programs; certificate programs may set a higher grading standard.

3. Proposals for certificate programs may draw from either pre-existing or new courses offered at the University.

4. Courses can be drawn from any level of coursework, and no requirements are mandated for a distribution of courses among lower- and upper-level courses.

5. Prerequisite courses may be required for courses in certificate programs, but these may also be waived by program coordinators on a case-by-case basis. Prerequisite courses may or may not count toward the certificate.

6. Certificate programs/departments may limit certificates to degree-seeking students only, to non-degree-seeking students only, or to a combination of both.

7. Certificate programs/departments may limit the degree of overlap between courses in a major or minor and a certificate.

VWU requires all new certificate programs to seek EPC and FACULTY ASSEMBLY approval. Modifications to a certificate program will be approved only by EPC. Until a new certificate application form is completed, departments or faculty seeking to propose a new certificate must submit a document that answers the following questions:

a. Explain the purpose/goal of the certificate, the potential student group that would be permitted to earn the certificate, and provide a rationale for offering the certificate.
b. Enumerate which courses will be permitted for the certificate.
c. Provide a plan for rotation of courses, appropriate staffing, and time-frame within which a student can complete the certificate.
d. Suggest any possible effects a new certificate would have on a department's current major(s) or minor(s).
e. Identify any new budgetary support that would be required to ensure the certificate could be offered.
f. Identify any institutional needs that must be met (particularly for non-degree students) in order to complete the certificate (e-mail, Blackboard, Interlibrary Loan, library resources and support, etc.).

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