

Approval Process for New Graduate and Professional Certificates

Definition:

A certificate is a set of related courses (where a “set” could consist of one course) intended to provide the graduate or professional student with specialized knowledge or expertise. The courses in a certificate do not constitute a degree or credential; however, such courses might be transferable to a degree or credential certificate.

Overview

New graduate and/or professional studies certificates are reviewed by the Graduate and Professional Studies Educational Policy Committee at Saint Mary’s College. The requirements for some certificates may be governed by external professional bodies; other certificates may be designed by faculty at Saint Mary’s College. In either case, the guidelines below should be followed, and approval obtained, before the certificate begins to accept students.

Guidelines for Approval

The Certificate Approval process is intended to meet the needs of a School that wishes to offer a certificate, either to students who are already enrolled in an existing program or to new students. Proposals for new certificates are submitted to the GPSEPC for approval. They must first be approved by signature of the Dean of the appropriate School, the Provost of the College, and the Vice President for Finance of the College.

The School or program proposing the certificate should contact the Registrar if they would like to have the name of the certificate included on student transcripts (beyond the usual list of courses and grades).

The GPSEPC will consider the proposal, based on the information provided according to these guidelines. The Chair of GPSEPC may request additional information, or seek the opinion of other faculty members and administrators if needed, before signing off on the proposal. If the GPSEPC rejects the proposal, reasons must be provided in writing to the authors of the proposal and a revised version may be submitted subsequently for further consideration, with new dated signatures from each of the designated officials, based on the revised version.

The basis for the GPSEPC's decision to accept the proposal is strictly academic: is the certificate as proposed of merit, does it offer a potentially valuable contribution to the academic offerings of the College, and how does it fit within the current and

prospective academic offerings of the College? Once a certificate has been approved, assessment of the certificate and on-going review will be the responsibility of the School and of any external professional body with oversight of the particular certificate, if one exists. Major changes (ones that affect one half or more of the courses required for the certificate) should be submitted to the GPSEPC for re-approval. Re-submission should follow the same steps given below, with any necessary sections updated and with new signatures obtained.

Proposal

The proposal itself should contain: a rationale for offering the certificate, based on the College's Mission and the School's goals/strategic plan; a clear and complete presentation of the academic structure of the certificate; a business plan, with the specific, **projected cost/revenue figures for the first three years of the certificate**; a completed library resource review; a process for assessment of the certificate within the School, and the signatures called for above.

Details

Name of Proposed Certificate:

School:

Program (if applicable):

Primary Contact Person:

Other Involved Faculty:

Date:

1) Context: Describe the need for the new certificate.

2) External professional requirements:

- a) If there is a professional body that sponsors or sanctions a certificate in this area, please attach the requirements specified by that body as an appendix, as well as documentation that the proposed certificate meets all such requirements.

3) Academic structure:

- a) How does the certificate fit within the strategic plan of the sponsoring School?
- b) Describe the learning goals and learning outcomes of the certificate.
- c) Provide the program of study, including number of units, sample syllabi, methodologies for content delivery, location, intended calendar, and necessary facilities/support.
- d) How, if at all, does the new certificate relate to existing programs and resources?
- e) What effects will the addition of this certificate have on other programs of the School and the College?

- f) What faculty have been involved in the design of the certificate? Who will teach in it? **What are the qualifications of the faculty who will teach in the certificate?**
- g) Describe the plan for assessing the educational effectiveness of the certificate, based on the learning outcomes identified in “b” and the program of study provided in “c.”
- h) What are the library resource needs of the certificate? Please consult a subject area librarian request a library resources review, and please attach the review as an appendix.

4) Competitive Analysis and Business Plan:

- a) What competitive analysis has been done of how this certificate meets educational needs in the market place?
- b) Budget (preferably in Excel format as well as in print): What are the projected enrollments, revenues, and costs associated with the certificate? Include start-up and initial marketing costs, as well as ongoing operational costs in this budget. What are the financial goals of the business plan?
- c) What, if any, new resources, especially staff and faculty, will be required for the successful operation of this certificate over time?
- d) What, if any, legal or contractual obligations are associated with this certificate? (e.g. rental of space, agreements with other organizations or groups, etc.)

5) Signature page (see attached). The signature page indicates that due diligence has been applied to each of the critical aspects of the proposal process, and must include:

- a) The dated signature of the Dean of the School, indicating that this certificate has support and approval at the School level and fits within the strategic plan of the School;
- b) The dated signature of the appropriate senior administrator of the College with authority over the School involved (usually the Provost), indicating that the intended certificate fits within the strategic plan of the College as a whole and has administrative support;
- c) The dated signature of the Vice President for Finance, certifying that the business plan is reasonable and fits within the financial strategic plan for the College and the School
- d) Additionally, if legal contracts are involved, the signature of the College Counsel;
- e) The dated signature of the current Chair of the Graduate and Professional Studies Educational Policies Committee, on behalf of the Committee, who reviews the proposal for academic merit after all the other approvals have been given.

The properly signed proposal will be kept on file in the GPSEPC office.

SIGNATURE PAGE

Name of Proposed Certificate:

School:

Program (if applicable):

Date:

The signatures below indicate approval for the proposed Certificate named above.

Dean of the School

Date

Provost

Date

Vice President for Finance

Date

College Counsel (if needed)

Date

Chair of GPSEPC

Date