

# Senate Undergraduate Certificate Legislation

## I. Undergraduate Certificates

**Definition:** "Undergraduate Certificate" is the term applied to a program of studies attesting to a level of competence or skills in a particular area or field. It is distinct from a defined undergraduate degree program, stream, specialization or informal concentration. A certificate recognizes a specific grouping of courses that i) are cross-disciplinary but with a thematic coherence, ii) form a coherent yet distinctive complement to the major of a degree program, or iii) lead to the acquisition of specific skills or professional expertise that may meet requirements of outside accrediting bodies.

### Categories of Certificates

#### Cross-Disciplinary Certificate

**Definition:** A cluster of courses in a defined thematic area of interest, which are not confined to a single disciplinary area of study or major.

**Minimum Standards:** 24 credits, at least 18 of which must be at the 2000-level or above, including 6 credits at the 3000- or 4000-level. In order to receive the certificate candidates must present a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 4.0 or greater in the courses taken to satisfy certificate requirements.

#### Disciplinary Certificate

**Definition:** A series of courses in a specific area of study that form a distinctive complement to studies in an undergraduate major discipline. The majority of courses taken towards the certificate will be in one major discipline. Whenever a student's major discipline coincides with that of the certificate not all of the course credits used to satisfy certificate requirements may also be used to satisfy degree major requirements.

**Minimum Standards:** 24 credits, 18 of which would normally be at the 3000-level or above. At least 12 credits of the disciplinary courses that satisfy certificate requirements must be in addition to those used to satisfy requirements of an undergraduate major. In order to receive the certificate candidates must present a cumulative GPA of 4.0 or greater in the courses taken to satisfy certificate requirements.

#### Certificate of Proficiency

**Definition:** An acknowledgement of proficiency (normally in a language) in a given area.

**Minimum Standards:** There would normally be a comprehensive examination in addition to course requirements (normally 12 credits). In order to receive the certificate candidates must present a cumulative GPA of 4.0 or greater in the courses taken to satisfy certificate requirements, although language certificates normally have higher requirements.

#### Professional Certificate

**Definition:** A series of courses that build specific skills and/or competencies often related to a professional expertise such as might be recognized by an external professional body.

**Minimum Standards:** Normally 24 credits, 18 credits of which would be at the 3000-level or above. In most cases, at least 12 credits of the disciplinary courses that satisfy certificate requirements must be in addition to those used to satisfy requirements of an undergraduate major being completed concurrently. (*Note: ASCP will consider variations to these minimum standards for certificates designed to meet specialized needs or requirements of particular professions*). In order to receive the certificate candidates must present a cumulative GPA of 4.0 or greater in the courses taken to satisfy certificate requirements.

### General Regulations

Program requirements are reviewed and approved by Faculty Council and Senate. Normally, Undergraduate Certificates will be completed concurrently with an undergraduate degree program and are differentiated from a degree program by a higher GPA requirement (the 4.0 specified above is

a lower limit) or a more focused selection of courses. However, direct-entry, stand-alone certificate programs are available and are primarily intended to meet the need for specific professional preparation. Such direct entry certificate programs will generally be in the nature of either career-entry or mid-career development, and candidates will normally already hold a degree or have significant post-secondary education. While most certificate programs (except for the Certificate of Proficiency) will require close to the minimum 24 credits, thereby differentiating a certificate from major requirements within a degree program, it is expected that some Professional Certificate programs will justify lower or higher credit requirements on the basis of standards or academic requirements set by external professional bodies. Cross-Disciplinary and Disciplinary Certificates might also in special circumstances justify a higher total credit requirement, but normally not more than 36 credits. A certificate that requires 36 credits or more may be designated as advanced. Since certificate courses are credit courses, admission requirements will be equivalent to those for an undergraduate degree program.

**Undergraduate Certificate Courses:** Undergraduate Certificate Programs are composed of courses which have been approved for credit in an undergraduate degree program. Each Program is responsible for determining which courses are acceptable for satisfaction of the Certificate Program requirements.

**Minimum Requirements for Multiple Certificates:** Students may acquire more than one certificate provided that at least 18 credits in each certificate are unique to the specific certificate.

**Residency Requirements:** The University residency requirement for undergraduate certificate programs is 18 credits for certificate programs requiring up to 36 credits, and 50% of the required credits for certificates comprising more than 36 credits. Normally, for undergraduate certificate programs requiring 18 credits or less, all credits are completed at York.

**Admission / Graduation Application and Transcript Notation:** Students seeking direct entry to a certificate program must submit written application when applying for admission to the University. Students already enrolled in an undergraduate degree program *are also expected to* apply for entry to a certificate program, normally prior to completion of 36 credits of their undergraduate degree program. Students must also submit application to graduate from a certificate program. Applications should be obtained from and filed with the unit administering the certificate program. Transcript notation that the requirements for a certificate have been completed will be made once the Registrar's Office has received notice from the unit administering the program. Certificates will not be conferred until candidates have successfully completed an undergraduate degree program if they are simultaneously enrolled in a degree and a certificate program.

## II. Certificates of Completion

### Definition

Certificates of Completion are awarded for the successful completion of an access or bridging program, which are defined as a designated program of study designed to "bridge" students into an academic degree program. The Certificates of Completion are distinct from both an undergraduate certificate and a non-degree studies certificate. A Certificate of Completion recognizes a student's accomplishment in a specified grouping of courses designed to lead to the acquisition of academic skills and knowledge necessary to perform successfully in an academic degree program, where that recognition may be desirable for external audiences.

### General Regulations

Access / bridging program requirements are reviewed and approved by Faculty Council (if appropriate) and Senate. In order to receive the Certificate of Completion of the program, candidates must meet the minimum requirements as stated by the program to satisfy certificate requirements. The certificate program is normally a direct-entry stand-alone program primarily intended to prepare students to meet the needs of an academic degree. In this way, the Certificate of Completion

recognizes the successful passage across a “bridge” into a university degree program. Normally, this “bridge” will be into the first year of a university degree for students with no prior university education and will be into an advanced level for students with international university education, and/or other post-secondary education credentials. The requirements of a Certificate of Completion may include a combination of academic and non-academic credits, or consist solely of academic credits, with a minimum requirement of 12.0 academic credits in either model.

**Certificate Courses for Academic Credit:** Courses for academic credit are courses which have been otherwise approved for academic credit. Each Certificate Program is responsible for determining which courses are acceptable and satisfy the Certificate Program requirements.

**Certificate Activities for Non-credit:** Activities for non-credit workshops/courses/modules are designed to supplement the academic credit by offering students exposure to the range of learning, professional and communication skills, and related cultural knowledge, for example, necessary to successful performance in an academic degree. Each Certificate Program is responsible for determining this content.

**Residency Requirements:** Students will complete all required academic and non-academic credits at York or at an institution collaborating with York in an Inter-Institutional Program. Thus, the University residency requirement for programs eligible for the Certificate of Completion is normally 100% of the required credits but in no case less than 60% of the total combination of academic and non-academic credits.

**Admissions Application:** Students seeking direct entry to a Certificate of Completion program must submit a written application when applying for admission to the University. Applications should be obtained from and filed with the University’s Office of Admissions. Certificates will be awarded upon successful completion of the program. Normally, students receiving a Certificate of Completion will be eligible for internal transfer directly into select degree programs.

**Transcript Notation:** A transcript notation that the requirements for a certificate have been completed will be made once the Registrar’s Office has received notice from the unit administering the program.

*Revised by Senate May 2011*