CERTIFICATE PROGRAM ADMISSIONS

Professional Certificates

Several departments and programs, in addition to offering degrees, offer professional certificates upon completion of a prescribed course of study. These certificates are different from teaching certification and do not lead to teaching credentials from PDE. Consult the individual department or program listings regarding offerings.

Policies and Procedures for Graduate Certificate Programs

Definitions

A graduate certificate program is a focused collection of courses that, when completed, affords the student a record of academic accomplishment in a given discipline or set of related disciplines. Graduate certificate programs are a minimum of 12 credits.

Admission criteria for graduate certificate programs are the same as for graduate degree programs. While the courses in a graduate certificate program may be used as evidence in support of a student’s application to a graduate degree program, the certificate itself is not considered a prerequisite, nor is it a guarantee of admission. Graduate certificate students are not eligible for graduate assistantships.

While taking the last course(s) of the certificate program, the student should apply for the certificate through their myWCU account.

Guidelines

1. Students are awarded a graduate certificate upon completion of a well-defined program of course work within an approved graduate program.
2. The didactic material encompassed within a graduate certificate program may represent a subset or extension of an existing graduate discipline.
3. For a graduate certificate program, the number of graduate credits is expected to be a minimum of 12. The number of credits must be appropriate to the learning objectives and focus of the program.
4. Graduate certificate programs may be at the post-baccalaureate or post-master’s level. Post-master’s graduate certificate programs must be designated as such.
5. Graduate certificate programs do not include a thesis.
6. All graduate certificate programs will be reviewed within the course of regular graduate program assessment and review.
7. Certificate programs also may be proposed for post-baccalaureate students that consist of undergraduate credit courses, professional credit courses, or noncredit courses. In such cases, the programs will not be considered to have met the standards for graduate certificate programs.
8. With the exception of courses offered in collaboration with another institution or expressly addressed in the certificate program requirements, a majority of credits for the certificate program must be completed at West Chester University. Graduate credits from another accredited institution may be accepted for transfer and are subject to the transfer of credit policy in place with approval of the department and the Dean of Graduate Studies.
9. Students pursuing a graduate certificate will be required to meet the same admissions and academic requirements as those defined for degree-seeking students (e.g., maintenance of a 3.0 GPA).
10. The title of any graduate certificate program must contain the words “Graduate Certificate Program.” Only Pennsylvania Department of Education certification programs may include the word “certification.”

Student Eligibility and Admission Criteria

1. Admission criteria beyond the bachelor’s degree from an accredited institution will be determined by the department and explicitly stated.
2. Each program may set admissions criteria above those required for general graduate admissions to a certificate program (e.g., higher GPA or TOEFL scores, standardized test scores, whether or not certificate courses may be counted towards a related master’s degree program).