Florida State University offers certificate programs in accordance with the regulations of the Florida Board of Governors and SACSCOC.

I. Definitions and Guidelines

A. The Florida Board of Governors (BOG) Regulation 8.011(7)(b) defines two types of certificates: a college credit certificate and a non-college-credit certificate.

1) A college credit certificate program is “an organized curriculum of college credit courses offered as a distinct area of study that leads to specific educational or occupational goals, and for which the university awards a certificate, diploma, or similar form of recognition upon completion" [BOG Regulation 8.011 (7)(b)]. SACSCOC Comprehensive Standard 3.4.4 refers to “certificates or other professional education outside a collegiate degree program.” Thus, certificates should be viewed as professional in nature.

Specifically:

- A college credit certificate is not intended as a degree, but as a supplement to a student’s specific educational goals or professional career preparation.
- Completion of a college credit certificate generally is related to a specific field, and usually associated with a limited set of occupations.
- College credit certificates may help prepare students for certain types of industry licensing, and to practice in or master technical aspects of an occupation.
- College credit certificates shall be noted on a student’s transcript as an official credential of the university.
- College credit certificate programs drawn from the existing approved curriculum for a degree program do not require separate approval by SACSCOC. However, to offer such a certificate at a new site does require notice or approval of the site by SACSCOC.
- A college credit certificate that is a significant departure from previously approved programs must be noticed or approved in advance by SACSCOC.
2) A non-college-credit certificate is “an organized curriculum of study of any length that is offered for non-college-credit (as measured through clock hours, continuing education units, competency exams, etc.), which leads to specific educational or occupational goals...” [BOG Regulation 8.011 (7)(c)].

Specifically:
- Those programs of study that do not award credit, such as those offered as part of continuing education, may not be termed an undergraduate or graduate college-credit certificate.
- Non-college-credit certificates will not be noted on transcripts.
- Non-college-credit certificates may not bear the official FSU seal.
- Non-college-credit certificates may issue a “Recognition of Completion” document.

B. The Florida Board of Governors (BOG) Regulation 8.011(7)(b) also cites other types of programs, including program minor, concentration, area of emphasis, track, or similar curricular offerings.

1) A specialized studies program refers to an organized curriculum that enhances or complements the degree to be awarded, but may not be used to satisfy a degree program’s requirement to complete a minor. “Such a curricular offering shall be as defined by the university with the credit-hour length set in accordance with the university policy, except that the number of credit hours shall not equal or exceed the number of credit hours established for a program major at the same degree level” [BOG Regulation 8.011 (7)(a)].

Specifically:
- Specialized Studies may be offered at the undergraduate or graduate level.
- Specialized Studies will not be noted on transcripts.
- Specialized Studies may not bear the official FSU seal.
- Specialized Studies may issue a “Recognition of Completion” document.

2) A minor refers to an organized curriculum that may be required to satisfy degree program requirements and “enhances or complements the degree to be awarded in a manner which leads to specific educational or occupational goals...” The number of credit hours shall not equal or exceed the number of...
credit hours established for a program major at the same degree level” [BOG Regulation 8.011 (7)(a)].

Specifically:
- Minors are to be offered at the undergraduate level only.
- In most cases, the courses used to satisfy Liberal Studies requirements and major requirements may not also be used to satisfy requirements of a minor.
- Minors will not be noted on transcripts.
- Minors may not bear the official FSU seal.
- Minors may issue a “Recognition of Completion” document.

II. Procedures

Proposed college credit certificate programs must be in compliance with the appropriate guidelines above and must undergo the approval process outlined below before being offered. Only certificates that involve credit coursework need to seek approval within this policy.

In keeping with the Technical Assistance Guidelines issued by the Florida BOG, “Universities must develop a process for identifying credit hours associated with course requirements for certification to practice in a professional occupation (e.g., teacher certification) and those courses that may have technical certification embedded as a requirement for passing the course (e.g., network administrator, specific operating systems, etc.)” (BOG Regulation 7.003). Further, “Universities must implement a process for identifying undergraduate certificate programs and the students enrolled in them so that associated courses can be exempted...” from the state excess hour fee identified in BOG Regulation 7.001(3).

Hence, all proposed college credit certificates must be in compliance with all definitions and all guidelines above, and must undergo the approval process outlined below before being offered.

1. Initiation. A proposal to create a certificate should be initiated by the director of the proposed certificate or the chair and/or dean of the unit(s) offering the proposed certificate, using the appropriate forms provided by the Office of the Vice President for Faculty Development and Advancement. The proposal shall be submitted using the following approval sequence:
   A. Department Curriculum Committee (or Advisory Committee for Institute or Center, if applicable)
B. Department Chair(s) or Director(s) of Institute(s) or Center(s)
C. Curriculum Committee(s) of School(s) and College(s)
D. Academic Dean(s)
E. Dean of Undergraduate Studies or Dean of the Graduate School, as appropriate
F. SACS Liaison
G. Office of the Vice President for Faculty Development and Advancement, for final approval.

Following approval, the Office of the Vice President for Faculty Advancement and Development shall notify the following offices that the certificate program is in effect:
A. Provost
B. Registrar
C. Department(s)
D. Academic Dean(s)
E. Dean of Undergraduate Studies or Dean of the Graduate School, as appropriate
F. SACS Liaison
G. Director of Institutional Effectiveness
H. Budget and Analysis
I. Office of Institutional Research
J. Office of the Vice President for Planning and Programs

2. Off-campus sites. No credit hours for a credit certificate program may be earned at an off-campus site, except for Panama City, FL, unless the site is approved for the certificate by the university’s regional accrediting body.

3. Proposal. The requirements pertaining to each section below must be reproduced within the body of the proposal in order to ensure that all sections have been satisfactorily addressed. The credit certificate proposal should include the following elements:

   A. Purpose. The proposal should identify particular needs, which cannot be met by existing degree programs or certificates, identifying the particular target group for the program. It should specify the skills and knowledge base to be achieved through the program. It must identify the requirements for certification essential to practice in, or master technical aspects of, an occupation and establish how specific courses satisfy this requirement. Finally, it should provide the anticipated start date.
B. Application Procedure. The proposal should describe the process by which an individual student applies to the program. It should clearly indicate the individual or position to which the application should be submitted and state that the certificate credential is not intended as a diploma or a degree.

C. Admission Requirements. The proposal must state the requirements for admission to the program. The admission process should specify whether an applicant must be currently pursuing a degree or may be registered as a non-degree seeking student. Other criteria for admissions may include previous educational background, grade point average, or other qualifications. The admissions requirements must clearly state that students must apply and be admitted to the certificate program in advance of beginning the coursework. The proposal should indicate the individuals or university positions that have the authority to admit a student to the certificate program.

D. Program of Studies. The proposal should include the total number of credits required and specify the courses to be taken, both required and elective, and any required or elective sequencing of courses. Credit hour requirements for each certificate may vary from 12 to 21 credits. Specific courses may either be required or elective. Each certificate program must include at least one common course or capstone experience required of all its students. There should be a plan for who is responsible for teaching the courses. There should also be a plan for approving the student's course of study upon admission to the program. No more than six credits in the certificate program may be included in another certificate program without justification provided to and approved by the relevant academic dean(s). Coursework used to fulfill the requirements of a certificate program may also be used to fulfill the requirements of an undergraduate major or minor. An undergraduate certificate shall not require the completion of graduate courses. Credit earned as part of a certificate program may or may not be transferable towards an advanced degree program as determined by criteria established in the advanced degree program.

E. Enrollment. The proposal should estimate the anticipated enrollment in the credit certificate program at years 1 and 5. It should indicate what resources are necessary to support the proposed certificate program and
what impact, if any, the use of these resources will have on existing degree or certificate programs.

F. Certificate Requirements. The proposal should indicate the number of credits required and any time limits governing when such credits are earned. It should indicate whether or not transfer credits are accepted and whether any specific grade point average is required. The proposal shall clearly distinguish between the purposes and character of the proposed undergraduate or graduate certificate and any related undergraduate minor or specialized study.

G. Institutional Effectiveness. The proposal for a credit certificate shall identify at least three student learning outcomes along with appropriate assessment methods. The credit certificate outcomes will be assessed annually. Upon approval of the credit certificate program, the program faculty must enter these outcomes and assessment procedures into the university’s institutional effectiveness portal. Credit certificate programs that award fewer than nine (9) certificates annually shall not enter outcome results, analyses or improvement plans in the portal, in order to avoid compromising student privacy. However, this circumstance must be reported in the institutional effectiveness portal.

H. Off-Campus Locations. The proposal should indicate that no credit hours for a certificate program may be earned at an off-campus site except as stated in provision II(2) of this policy.

I. Design of Certificate and Wording. The proposal for a credit certificate should include the name of the certificate, the date awarded, and the school or college (and department or unit) awarding the certificate. It should indicate whether it is an undergraduate or graduate certificate.

4. Review. All credit certificate programs, their curricula and on-going status are to be reviewed by the curriculum committee(s) of the appropriate unit(s) at least every 7 years. Compliance with policy requirements and restrictions is mandated for continuation of certificate programs. Any certificate program that has not awarded a certificate in the previous 7 years will be terminated. The Office of the Vice President for Faculty Development and Advancement will work with the Office of the Vice President for Programs and Planning and Institutional Research to ensure that periodic evaluation is completed.
5. Termination or changes. A credit certificate program may be terminated or changed by sending a memo from the director of the certificate, as available, or the faculty, chair, and/or dean of the unit(s) offering the certificate, to the Vice President for Faculty Advancement and Development. The latter must approve termination of or changes to certificate programs, and will notify the SACS liaison and other affected offices for appropriate action.

Certificate programs will continue to be published in the *General Bulletin* until officially terminated. Programs seeking termination that have students pursuing the certificate must provide a teach-out plan to the Office of the Vice President for Planning and Programs. Plans shall be submitted 4 months in advance of the proposed program’s termination and must include a plan for notifying current students and a map for certificate completion, as required by SACSCOC.

6. Administration. The following items apply to all undergraduate and graduate credit certificates:

A. All credit certificates shall require an application for all students to enroll. The unit offering the certificate and the dean or the dean’s representative must approve the application.

B. Successful completion of an approved credit certificate will be posted to the academic transcript. Units also may print and distribute affidavits to students earning credit certificates.

C. Descriptions of approved credit certificates will be included in the appropriate university publications and websites. The Office of Institutional Research will maintain an updated list of all approved credit certificates.

D. Certificates will not be assigned a CIP Code and will not be included in the State University System Academic Degree Program Inventory as a stand-alone academic program.

E. In cooperation with the Office of Institutional Research, the Registrar will publish the number of awards earned annually for each active credit certificate program.
F. General information regarding credit certificate policies will be available on the website of the Office of the Vice President for Faculty Development and Advancement. The Office of the Vice President for Faculty Development and Advancement will have responsibility for the policy, its periodic review and revision, and oversight.

APPROVED BY:

[Signature]

Garnett S. Stokes, Provost

1/15/2013

Date

Authority: BOG Regulations 8.011