Title: Professional Certificate Offerings  
Category: Academic Administrative Processes  
Policy No: 3.16.B  
Effective: Fall 2012;  
Revisions: Fall 2014; Fall 2015; Spring 2020  
Last Reviewed: AY2020  

Policy Statement: Certificate programs bring together a related series of courses and requirements into a coherent body of study within a discipline or set of related disciplines. Certificate programs allow students and professionals to focus on areas of expertise or specialties that are either not offered by regular degree programs or represent narrow components within current degree programs. Courses or offerings that contribute to certificate programs are purposefully sequenced to provide comprehensive study of a particular subject area. All certificate programs at UCO must fit into one of the university’s recognized types of certificate programs as outlined in 3.16A and 3.16B. All certificate programs at UCO must be assessed annually by the academic or support unit that sponsors it.

In addition, the US Department of Education must approve all new Title IV eligible (financial aid funding) certificate programs prior to the certificate being offered. All departments, colleges, and divisions of the university that wish to offer an AC must seek approval from the Provost.

The Higher Learning Commission must separately approve all new Title IV eligible (financial aid funding) certificate programs containing credit bearing courses that are not substantially related to or derived from existing programs. If 50% or more of the credit bearing courses in a certificate program are developed for that certificate program and are not derived from courses in existing certificate or degree programs, then the university is required to obtain approval of the new certificate by the Higher Learning Commission prior to the certificate being offered. This approval must be obtained prior to marketing the program or matriculating students into the program. See the following link for more information on certificate programs:

https://www.hlcommission.org/Accreditation/institutional-change.html

Departments, colleges, and divisions of the university that wish to offer Professional Certificates (PC) must gain approval from the Provost prior to the certificate being offered. Professional Certificates are managed through the Institute for Learning Environment Design (ILED).

This policy does not affect course sequences that are developed to support external certifications, e.g., professional licensure, unless a UCO certificate program is approved.

Professional Certificate (PC) Programs (non-transcripted). Professional Certificates (PCs) are continuing education programs and are not recognized on the UCO academic transcript. PCs are comprised of pre-approved, noncredit offerings and/or credit-bearing
courses. No more than nine credits of credit-bearing courses may be included in any PC. PCs must be comprised of at least one non-credit component. PCs may meet related professional requirements. PC programs are managed through the Institute for Learning Environment Design (ILED).

- Credit bearing courses included in any PC program are graded in accordance with university guidelines, posted to the UCO transcript, and may apply toward a bachelor’s degree, master’s degree, or minor as long as they are consistent with the requirements of those degrees at UCO.
- PC programs are not eligible for Title IV student financial aid.
- The Provost must authorize all PC programs to complete the approval process.
- PCs utilizing resources from a department/school, college, or division must be vetted through the appropriate department chair/school director and dean or division head.
- Forms and procedures for requesting approval of a PC program will be maintained by ILED. Program requests must be submitted to ILED at least 90 business days prior to the anticipated start of the program and must be approved prior to the actual start date of the PC program.
- ILED is responsible for ensuring that the quality of the educational experience is of high caliber and reflects the mission of the institution.
- PC programs may be offered at any time of the year and for any duration that meets the needs of the PC program as authorized by ILED.
- Some PCs may award professional continuing education units.
- ILED will maintain records for student progress toward and will verify completion of PCs.
- ILED is vested with sole authority and exclusive right on behalf of the University of Central Oklahoma to issue documents bearing the title “Professional Certificate” or bearing the appearance of an official certificate related to each approved PC program.

Purpose: To bring consistency to the process of implementing certificate programs.

Implementation Date: Fall 2012; Revised Fall 2014; Revised Fall 2015; Spring 2020

Coordinating Offices: Institute for Learning Environment Design, Office of Academic Affairs

Academic Affairs Point of Contact: Office of the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs

Policy revision approved by the Co-Interim Vice President for Academic Affairs on April 22, 2020
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Policy revision dated April 22, 2020
The University of Central Oklahoma
Supercedes all previous policy revisions