UNDERGRADUATE CERTIFICATES

DESCRIPTION

Undergraduate Certificate Programs are a credentialed course of study (approved by the Faculty Senate on April 7, 2014) focused on a particular topic germane to the mission and vision of the University of Vermont. These programs are for matriculated undergraduate students only, and constitute a category of certificate programs distinct from Post-Baccalaureate Certificates, Continuing Education Academic Certificates, Continuing Education Professional Certificates, and Graduate College Certificates of Graduate Study.

A distinguishing feature of Undergraduate Certificate programs is a capstone or other mentored learning experience that integrates knowledge and skills from prior coursework and in which students learn through innovation, creativity and reflection. Academic units have the freedom to design specific curricula for Undergraduate Certificates, but those curricula must conform to the minimum requirements set forth in this document.

PURPOSES

The purposes of undergraduate certificates are:

1. To broaden and enrich learning and life skills opportunities for undergraduate students without impeding the students' ability to complete their degree requirements in a timely manner.
2. To engage students in substantive learning experiences to which they would otherwise not be exposed.
3. To expand experiential and interdisciplinary learning options at the University of Vermont.
4. To promote integrative learning and offer students the opportunity to gain additional exposure to areas of particular interest.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

1. Undergraduate certificate programs should offer a unique learning experience that does not largely replicate or compete with existing academic minors
2. Each undergraduate certificate program is established and administered by one or more sponsoring academic units which will be responsible for maintaining program quality.
3. Undergraduate certificate programs must have a clearly stated mission, program goals, learning objectives and desired student outcomes. The curriculum is scaffolded in such a way as to foster developmental growth of the student over the course of the certificate program.
4. Undergraduate certificates are comprised of a minimum of 12 credits of academic core courses, at least 6 of which must be at the 100-level or higher, plus a significant credit-bearing integrative learning component.
5. The vehicles for integrative learning may include, but are not limited to, credited academic internships, service-learning courses, teaching, research, reflective essays, case studies or creative projects.
6. Prerequisite coursework may be required for enrollment in an undergraduate certificate program.
7. Special topics courses may be included in undergraduate certificate programs, although they must be reviewed for permanent status after three offerings in separate semesters, consistent with academic policies.
8. Undergraduate certificates are not to be required for any degree program.
9. No more than 50% of the total credits in the certificate program may be transfer credits.
10. Students enrolled in an undergraduate certificate program must maintain a minimum grade point average (GPA) and other performance standards as specified by the sponsoring academic unit(s).
11. Successful completion of an undergraduate certificate will be recorded in the student's official transcript. Unsuccessful completion of an undergraduate certificate will not prevent a student from graduating and will not be recorded in the transcript.
12. Each undergraduate certificate program will be included in the appropriate cluster of programs in the APR schedule.
13. The Curricular Affairs Committee of the Faculty Senate shall review proposed undergraduate certificate programs with respect to these standards and criteria.

OPERATIONAL PRINCIPLES

1. Proposal Development and Approval: The sponsoring unit (Department, School or College) will prepare a proposal following the format described below. As with any new or substantially modified academic program, Undergraduate Certificate programs must undergo the established review and approval processes at the department, college, Faculty Senate and University levels, including the Board of Trustees.
2. Application and Admission to Undergraduate Certificate Programs: Admissions will be handled by the sponsoring unit(s). Students must apply to the sponsoring unit(s) by the date specified using a standard application form endorsed by the Curricular Affairs Committee. The sponsoring unit(s) will notify the student and the home unit (the college or school of the student's major) of acceptance or rejection.
3. Catalog Description: Undergraduate certificate programs will be described in detail in the UVM Catalog.
4. Enrollment Limitations: Because of enrollment limitations, some undergraduate certificate programs may not be accessible to all students.
5. Commitment: Sponsoring units will make a good faith effort to make curricular components available on a regular basis so that students can complete their undergraduate certificate programs in a timely manner.

6. Advising: The sponsoring unit(s) will develop and maintain an effective system of advising for all students enrolled in its undergraduate certificate programs.
7. Certification and Student Records: The student's home unit shall certify completion of the undergraduate certificate. The sponsoring unit is the only body authorized to make course substitutions for satisfying the certificate requirements and shall notify the student's home unit in writing regarding any substitutions. The student's major advisor is not authorized to make course substitutions in certificate requirements. As with all credentialed academic programs, undergraduate certificates will be indicated as such in students' transcripts.
8. Alteration of Undergraduate Certificate Programs: Alterations to undergraduate certificate programs made by its sponsor and which meet or exceed the noted criteria must be submitted for review by the Curricular Affairs Committee as described in Format for Proposals to Substantially Revise a Curriculum, Academic Program, Research or Service Endeavor (Appendix B) located on the Faculty Senate Website.