

## **CERTIFICATES (Credit-bearing Undergraduate)**

### **Approvals**

Academic Council: 4/25/19

### **Definition.**

A credit-bearing certificate is a prescribed set of courses leading to a credential that should be focused on a defined set of skills or structured expertise. Often a certificate reflects an emerging area of expertise in demand in the marketplace, or professional development requirements that are necessary to stay current. A certificate does not constitute an entire degree program, but it is a separate credential. As such, certificates are accessible to both degree and non-degree seeking students.

Certificates should not be confused with the process of professional certification awarded by governmental and professional agencies for teaching and other fields. Certificates are developed and assessed by the offering academic unit.

### **Rationale.**

Messiah College has offered graduate and post-graduate level certificates since the launching of graduate programs, so the concept of a certificate program is not new. To date, Messiah has not identified a certificate as a type of undergraduate academic program. Increasingly, certificates serve two purposes at the undergraduate level. First, a certificate can be a stand alone program offered to non-degree seeking students as an attractive option for career advancement and/or personal development. Second, a certificate can be offered as a part of the degree students seek thereby providing them with an added credential and documenting the value of the skill set on the transcript. Messiah is interested in both of these purposes.

### **Parameters.**

- a. Degree seeking students are not required to complete a certificate.
- b. Certificates require a minimum of 9 credit hours with a maximum of 15 credit hours.
- c. A student may complete more than one certificate.
- d. To be awarded a certificate at least 6 credit hours must be completed at Messiah College.
- e. Courses completed for a certificate require a grade of 'C' or higher.
- f. There is no overlap/double counting rule applied to students earning certificates and other majors, minors, or concentrations. A degree-seeking student may complete the certificate's coursework in part or in whole as part of their coursework taken to fulfill major degree requirements, as a use of their free electives, or over and above their degree requirements. A non-degree seeking student enrolled in the certificate only will only take courses that are part of the certificate.
- g. New certificates may not overlap more than 3 credits with existing certificates.
- h. All students must declare their intent to earn the certificate to the Registrar's Office prior to their final term/semester of coursework.
- i. A certificate will have prescribed learning outcomes and will be assessed.
- j. Upon completion of the certificate, the College awards the certificate and documents the completion of it on the student's transcript.
- k. The time to complete a certificate shall not exceed 4 years from the point of enrollment.

**Procedures for Completing a Certificate.**

- a. Information about available certificates and certificate requirements can be found in the College catalog, in Degree Works, or obtained from the student's advisor or Department Chair.
- b. Degree seeking students are encouraged to discuss their interests in a certificate with their advisor during registration times. If the student has specific questions, he/she can contact the School Dean, Department Chair, or Program Director of the academic unit that houses the certificate.
- c. Students seeking only a certificate enroll as a non-degree student.

**Approval Process.**

All certificates must be approved by an academic department/program, the associated school dean, the Assessment of Student Learning Committee, the Curriculum Committee, Academic Council, and COE Senate.