



Post-Baccalaureate Certificate Programs

Preliminary Criteria for Review

DRAFT: November 11~~3~~, 2021

A certificate is a prescribed set of courses leading to a college-approved credential that is focused on a defined set of skills or subject expertise. Westmont College will offer a judicious selection of post-baccalaureate certificates that are designed to provide intellectual enrichment and the development of a coherent set of skills and aptitudes. Certificates are not degrees, are usually completed in one year or less, and consist of 20-4-32 hours-units of coursework. A certificate issued with the Westmont seal indicates that the student has successfully achieved the objectives of the program. Students must earn a minimum 2.0 grade point average to receive a certificate.

Certificates must be approved by the Academic Senate and by the full faculty via Faculty Meeting and shall meet the following criteria:

- Consistency with the mission of the college.
- Each course or module must have the academic rigor of upper-division curricula.
- Each course or module must have 1-3 distinct learning objectives-outcomes and a means of measuring students' achievement of those objectives-outcomes.
- Each program must reflect and draw upon the liberal arts commitment of the college, primarily in its emphasis on qualities such as interdisciplinary study, civil discourse, and critical and creative thinking.
- Each program must engage students in exploring the relationship of Christian thought and practice to the subjects of the certificate.
- Each course or module must be taught by a Westmont faculty member, either an approved adjunct or a full-time faculty member.

The Academic Senate will reserve the right to ask particular academic departments to review and approve courses or modules provide input regarding courses of a proposed certificate that fit into the department's disciplinary scope.

Commented [MOU1]: See comment on p. 2.

Commented [MOU2]: Per our discussion last week, lowering the minimum would make it more reasonable for a part-time student to complete a certificate in a year.

Commented [MOU3]: Per our discussion last week; would seem to be a logical addition that is consistent with other Westmont degrees or diplomas.

Commented [MOU4]: I don't think we discussed this issue last time.

Commented [MOU5]: Per last week's discussion.

Some additional comments (by Rick Ostrander)

1. My general philosophy is that academic policy develops best from a combination of general institutional principles and actual experience. In the case of certificates, at this time we have only one actual proposal being developed (Theological Leadership, by Religious Studies). It would seem that the general/preliminary criteria articulated above would provide Religious Studies with sufficient guidance in formulating their proposal, while leaving more detailed issues (online vs. on-ground courses, transfer courses, paper certificate, etc.) to be discussed in relation to a particular program rather than in a vacuum.
2. According to Tim Loomer, we will need to apply to WASC for a substantive change to offer certificates. Thus, WASC requirements will probably impact the nature of our certificates as well, so it might make sense to actually run a certificate proposal through the WASC approval process before attempting to articulate further details in a Westmont certificate policy.
3. The best way forward at this time, therefore, might be to have Senate discuss (and perhaps revise) and approve the above draft in principle (or forward to Faculty Meeting for discussion and approval in principle), then remain in communication with Religious Studies as the department's proposal moves through the approval process to ensure consistency with the college's criteria.