

Academic Standards

Report to Senate, from February 23, 2021

I. Academic Standards was requested by the President of the Faculty Senate to follow the progress of a recent proposal by CT Governor Ned Lamont to create automatic admission to the CSCUs.

Current status of the proposal:

- [Press Release](#) Feb. 4
- Text of SB-881, An Act Concerning Workforce Development ([pdf](#)) (relevant sections are §20 and 21, beginning p. 20)
- Bill status: Referred to Joint Committee on Higher Education and Employment Advancement

II. Academic Standards approved two policy changes

- A. Guidelines for the Creation and Administration of Undergraduate Certificates (Appendix A)
- B. Catalog language for undergraduate Certificates (Appendix B)

Appendix A

Central Connecticut State University

Guidelines for Undergraduate Certificate Programs

These guidelines are intended to establish uniform policy and procedure for the establishment and administration of undergraduate certificate programs at CCSU. They apply primarily to credit-bearing certificates developed within and awarded by academic departments, although several the policies described here will be applicable to "industry" certificate programs—that is, those offered through or in partnership with an external certifying body. Information on graduate certificates can be found in the Graduate Catalogue. Non-credit bearing certificate programs are housed within CCSU Continuing Education.

Overview of Undergraduate Certificates

An undergraduate certificate is a stand-alone credential comprised of specific coursework structured to develop professionally applicable skills and knowledge. Certificates are distinct from traditional degree-seeking programs and may be obtained independently, but they may also be pursued concurrently within an undergraduate degree program, as complementary to a degree, after the completion of a degree, or in preparation for the pursuit of a degree. Thus

undergraduate certificate programs are available to either degree seeking or non-degree seeking students.

Certificate programs require a minimum of 9 credits and typically consist of 12-15. Most are distinct from minors in providing fewer electives, a narrower and more professionally directed focus, and a more structured curriculum. In relation to the content offered in existing academic majors,

- a certificate may be distinct from existing degree programs, such as a new interdisciplinary certificate that shares only a course or two with any one department;
- a focused subset of courses offered within an existing major that allows students additional concentration;
- a group of courses within a degree program that offers specific training, skills or knowledge to working professionals not currently seeking a degree, or provides academic or professional benefit to students simultaneously majoring in other programs.

Curriculum Requirements and Policies for Undergraduate Certificates

Any course credit obtained as part of a certificate may be applied to either a major or minor within a degree program. There is no limit on the number of courses that can apply both to a certificate and a degree. Certificates are intended to be "stackable," such that a course taken may apply to more than one certificate simultaneously, and multiple certificates may be obtained on the way to an undergraduate degree. However, in the case of certificates embedded in a major, courses required for the certificate may not all count toward the specific curricular requirements of the major.

Curriculum. Certificate programs must include a minimum of 9 credit hours, and will usually consist of 12-15, although there is no upper limit. Course selection, content, workload, and outcomes must be clearly defined and appropriate for the course level, credits awarded, and any sequencing within the program. Given the relatively small number of courses that constitute a certificate, programs should not have concentrations.

Creation of a new certificate program requires the approval of the department and its school's academic dean. In schools that do not have an administrative body overseeing interdisciplinary programs, new interdisciplinary certificates should be housed in one department, which will provide approval; chairs from additional departments contributing courses should also be consulted. If the program includes courses from multiple schools, approval must be sought from the dean of each. The certificate will require a new program submission through the University Curriculum Committee, and any new courses will likewise require Committee approval through the new course submission process.

Undergraduate certificates that are 15 or fewer credits are reported to the BOR as below-threshold notifications and do not require a concept paper. Certificate programs that are more

than 15 credits or have the option of more than 15 credits (e.g., 15-16 credits) must go through the new program process of the BOR, which includes a concept paper and new program proposal. For more information about these processes, refer to the [Program Guide](#). If a new certificate is a “child” of a parent program, the certificate should have the same CIP code as the parent program.

Admissions Requirements. A new certificate program will need to provide an admissions policy, including any prerequisites for entering the program, which must be approved by the University Academic Standards Committee. Certificate programs may choose to use the basic University admission standards, or set higher requirements (g.p.a., specific courses completed, pre-certifications). However, those proposing new programs should bear in the mind that certificates are intended to stand alone from degree programs and be comprehensive within their narrow focus, thus additional requirements should be as minimal as possible. At the same time, the purpose of any additional admissions requirements should be to ensure that students have the appropriate academic or professional experience to succeed in the program's courses.

[Program Administration and Review](#)

Each program should have a designated director responsible for coordinating admissions, course scheduling, student advising, student academic progress, and program review and completion.

Assessment. Since undergraduate certificates are formally recognized programs, they must be assessed using learning outcomes determined by faculty. It is recommended that each undergraduate certificate program establish a minimum of 3 learning outcomes but no more than 5. Following AAC policy, certificate programs can be embedded within "parent" baccalaureate degree programs. For a certificate program to be a child of such a degree program, 75% of the credits in the child must come from courses in the parent program. In addition, ALL of the certificate's learning outcomes must be represented in the outcomes of the larger program (thus the certificate's outcomes will be a subset of the learning outcomes for the degree program).

Because of the overlap in outcomes between certificate and degree, child certificate programs can be assessed as part of the parent program. Given the difficulty of tracking enrollments in overlapping programs, and the potential for students to join a certificate program after completing several courses, assessment can be course-based without separating students enrolled in the certificate. Assessment of child certificate programs will follow the cycle of the parent program, including regular submission to the University Assessment Committee and periodic external program review or accreditation.

[Admissions and Registration](#)

Undergraduate certificates are available both to students seeking degrees and to non-degree seeking students. Students already matriculated to CCSU and pursuing a degree may add a certificate program by meeting any additional admission requirements established by the program, completing any application materials specific to the program, and by submitting the Registrar's Change of Major Form. Students taking courses within a program who wish to declare for the certificate must do so before completing the final course in the program.

Students not currently matriculated to CCSU can apply to a certificate program by completing the online application through the University Office of Admissions. Applicants must submit the following:

- Highschool transcript(s)
- College transcripts (if any)
- Non-refundable application fee

Applicants may also be required to complete any application materials required by a particular certificate program and/or meet additional requirements set by the program. Students who complete a certificate and wish to pursue a degree can use the CCSU Reactivation Form.

Students accepted into a certificate program should be sent a letter of acceptance identifying their advisor within the program, describing any time-to-completion limit established by the program, and making clear that acceptance into the certificate program does not guarantee acceptance to any other program in the University.

Transfer Credit. Whether in a degree seeking program or not, students pursuing a certificate may request the application of transferred credit. The determination of whether a transferred course meets the specific certificate requirements will be made by the program. Students may transfer no more than 50% of the credits required to complete a certificate into the program. Students requesting transferred credit for experiential or other non-traditional forms of learning may do so through CCSU's existing policy for Acceptance of Non-Traditional Credit.

Non-matriculated students interested in pursuing individual courses within a certificate program may register through CCSU's Registrar's Office. Prospective students will need to meet any prerequisites or permissions required to enroll in a course.

Program Completion

Certificate seeking students must maintain a minimum cumulative grade-point average of 2.00 and receive grades of C- or better in all courses required for the certificate unless otherwise specified. At least 50% of courses must have been completed at CCSU. Certificates will be conferred at the 4 times during the academic year that degrees are conferred: May, August, December, and January.

As in the case of undergraduate degrees, the Office of the Registrar reviews a student's graduation evaluation and notifies them of any remaining program requirements. After a

student has completed all requirements the certificate will be conferred in the term associated with the completion of their last program requirement(s). The certificate will appear on the academic transcript.

Certificate requirements must be completed in full for a student to participate in commencement exercises. Students who complete a certificate but who have not obtained a degree are not eligible for graduation honors.

International Students

International students must apply through the Office of Admissions and meet all the criteria established there for non-U.S. citizens or non-permanent residents.

Financial Aid

Non-degree seeking students in a certificate program are not eligible for financial aid; students pursuing a certificate as part of a degree may qualify.

Additional Policies

Unless otherwise stated here, all policies in the undergraduate catalogue apply to students enrolled in certificate programs. Students pursuing certificates are also required to adhere to the CCSU Student Code of Conduct and are entitled to all of the rights indicated in the Code. Students in certificate programs may also make use of CCSU's various student services.

Appendix B

Proposal for Catalog Entry on Undergraduate Certificate Programs

[Current Policy ([catalog link](#))]

Undergraduate Certificates

An undergraduate certificate is a credential that is conferred upon the satisfactory completion of a postsecondary education program of study. An undergraduate certificate program may be completed as a stand-alone program or concurrently with a bachelor's degree program. Unless otherwise specified, all undergraduate academic policies and procedures apply to undergraduate certificate students. ~~Admission criteria for undergraduate certificates are determined by the offering department~~

[Proposed Additions]

Curriculum Requirements and Policies for Undergraduate Certificates

Any course credit obtained as part of a certificate may be applied to either a major or minor within a degree program. There is no limit on the number of courses that can apply both to a certificate and a degree. Certificates are intended to be "stackable," such that a course taken may apply to more than one certificate simultaneously, and multiple certificates may be obtained on the way to an undergraduate degree. However, in the case of certificates embedded in a major, courses required for the certificate may not all count toward the specific curricular requirements of the major.

Admissions and Registration

Undergraduate certificates are available both to students seeking degrees and to non-degree seeking students. Students already matriculated to CCSU and pursuing a degree may add a certificate program by meeting any additional admission requirements established by the program, completing any application materials specific to the program, and by submitting the Registrar's Change of Major Form. Students taking courses within a program who wish to declare for the certificate must do so before completing the final course in the program.

Students not currently matriculated to CCSU can apply to a certificate program by completing the online application through the University Office of Admissions. Applicants must submit the following:

- Highschool transcript(s)
- College transcripts (if any)
- Non-refundable application fee

Applicants may also be required to complete any application materials required by a particular certificate program and/or meet additional requirements set by the program. Students who complete a certificate and wish to pursue a degree can use the CCSU Reactivation Form.

Transfer Credit. Whether in a degree seeking program or not, students pursuing a certificate may request the application of transferred credit. The determination of whether a transferred course meets the specific certificate requirements will be made by the program. Students may transfer no more than 50% of the credits required to complete a certificate into the program. Students requesting transferred credit for experiential or other non-traditional forms of learning may do so through CCSU's existing policy for Acceptance of Non-Traditional Credit.

Non-matriculated students interested in pursuing individual courses within a certificate program may register through CCSU's Registrar's Office. Prospective students will need to meet any prerequisites or permissions required to enroll in a course.

Program Completion

Certificate seeking students must maintain a minimum cumulative grade-point average of 2.00 and receive grades of C- or better in all courses required for the certificate unless otherwise specified. At least 50% of courses must have been completed at CCSU. Certificates will be conferred at the 4 times during the academic year that degrees are conferred: May, August, December, and January.

As in the case of undergraduate degrees, the Office of the Registrar reviews a student's graduation evaluation and notifies them of any remaining program requirements. After a student has completed all requirements the certificate will be conferred in the term associated with the completion of their last program requirement(s). The certificate will appear on the academic transcript.

Certificate requirements must be completed in full for a student to participate in commencement exercises. Students who complete a certificate but who have not obtained a degree are not eligible for graduation honors.