

The University Senate of Michigan Technological University

Proposal 43-15 (amended 04-15-15)

(Voting Units: Academic)

“Post-Degree Undergraduate Certificates”

I. Background

Certificate programs at Michigan Tech predate the establishment of minors and were used largely for the purposes now fulfilled by minors, i.e., recognizing students for active and in depth engagement in an academic discipline different from their major. When minors were instituted at Michigan Tech some departments created minors that essentially duplicated existing certificate programs. No prohibition against double counting credits between minors and certificates was proposed when minors were instituted. The lack of a rule against double counting has resulted in some students earning both a minor and a certificate in a topic when the course requirements of the two are largely overlapping. The listing of both the minor and certificate on the transcript implies that student has met the requirements of two different, in depth areas of study which is not the case. Adding a prohibition against double counting credits between minors and certificates or between two different certificates will provide a more honest representation of the work the student has completed at Michigan Tech. The matter of double counting credits between certificates and majors is complex. The awarding of a certificate by the University implies that students have done work beyond the typical requirements of their major to broaden and focus their education. In this proposal ~~the hours required for a certificate program are increased from 12 to 18 but~~ no rule disallowing double counting credits between the major program and the certificate is instituted. ~~The 18 hour requirement helps assure that the student has met the goal of broadening and focusing their education.~~ A residency requirement for a portion of the courses used to fulfill the certificate is instituted to assure that the credential awarded by the university meets our standards of education.

A requirement has been added that certificates will be awarded to only post-degree students. Changes in Federal reporting requirements for Title IV funds would pose another level of reporting on the university if certificates are awarded to students who are not seeking a degree.

While current certificate programs are continued, even when their requirements duplicate a minor, academic units should evaluate the goals of all certificate programs and decide if those programs should be continued, shelved, or dropped. ~~Certificate programs currently requiring fewer than 18 hours must be brought up to that requirement.~~ New certificate programs should be proposed only when the goals of the program cannot be met by a minor or concentration within a major or when an external professional organization defines the content of a recognized certificate program.

This proposal differs from Proposal 2-06, Undergraduate Certificates, the current proposal dealing with certificates, in the following points:

1. Certificates will only be available to post degree students.
2. Credits cannot be double counted between certificate programs or between certificates and minors.
3. ~~The minimum hours required for a certificate program are increased from 12 to 18.~~
4. A residency requirement of nine credits of upper-level and one-half of the total certificate credits is instituted for a portion of the credits applied to a certificate.
5. Criteria for the approval of new certificate programs are detailed.

II. Proposed Catalog Copy

A certificate is a credential awarded for the completion of a body of courses focused on a disciplinary or interdisciplinary theme. Certificates are noted on official transcripts and allow departments to offer curricular options not able to be met by a minor or a concentration within a major degree.

Certificates are offered to post-degree students who have previously completed a Bachelor's degree. Post-degree students need to comply with current admissions and enrollment practices and will be awarded certificates when the requirements of the certificate are completed. In all cases students seeking a certificate should indicate their interest to the academic unit responsible for the certificate. No credits can be applied (double counted) to the requirements of both a certificate program and a minor or to two certificate programs.

In addition to meeting the requirements of the ~~minor~~ certificate as specified by the academic unit offering the ~~minor~~ certificate, a student must:

- Complete all credits used to meet certificate requirements with a grade of C or higher.
- Complete a minimum of ~~18 hours~~ 12 hours, with no more than 25 hours for the certificate.
- Complete at least nine of the credits must be at the 3000 or higher level.
- Complete at least nine credits at the 3000 or higher level and one-half of the total credits used to fulfill the requirements of the certificate program of courses listed in the Michigan Tech course catalog and taught by Michigan Tech faculty members either on campus, at a field location, or through distance learning.

New certificate programs will be approved only when the goals of the certificate program cannot be met by a minor or a concentration within a major degree or when an external professional organization defines the content of a widely recognized certificate program.

Governing Policy on Certificates in Degree Programs

This proposal replaces Proposal 2-06, Undergraduate Certificates, which, in turn, replaced Proposal 10-93 Definition and Role of Certificate Programs.

III. Effective Date

~~Programs will be given until~~ This policy will be effective starting the beginning of the Fall 2016 semester to allow existing certificate participants to finish and for programs to convert existing certificates into minors, if they so desire.