

**SAN JOSÉ STATE UNIVERSITY  
ONE WASHINGTON SQUARE  
SAN JOSÉ, CA 95192**

**Amendment A to University Policy S16-17, Academic  
Certificate Programs: Review and Approval Process**

**Amends: S16-17**

**Legislative History:**

At its meeting of December 5, 2022, the Academic Senate approved the following policy amendment presented by Senator Haverfield for the Curriculum and Research Committee.

**ACTION BY THE UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT:**

**Signed and approved by Interim President  
Steve Perez on December 9, 2022.**

**Rationale:**

University Policy S16-17 defines the review and approval process for academic certificate programs. This amendment updates reporting and oversight roles to match current university structures and adds language intended to better define basic and advanced certificates, provides safeguards for students stacking certificates to complete a master's degree, clarifies double counting of courses for more than one certificate, defines expiration of courses for certificates, and corrects an error in the description of grade averaging.

**Resolved:** That the following amendments be adopted; and be it further

**Resolved:** That all certificate programs at San José State University must be reviewed and approved under the process outlined in the attached guidelines; and be it further

**Resolved:** That only certificates from approved academic certificate programs can be awarded and posted on transcripts.

**Approved (C&R):** 11/14/2022

**Vote:** 10-0-0

**Present:** Thalia Anagnos (seat B), Marc d'Alarcao (seat C), Megan Chang (seat D), Hiu Yung Wong (seat G), Wei-Chien Lee (seat H), Stefan Frazier (seat I), Scott Shaffer (seat J), Marie Haverfield (seat K, chair), Ellen Middaugh (Faculty-at-Large), Colin Onita (seat E)

**Absent:** Safiullah Saif (seat L), Richard Mocariski (seat A)

**Financial Impact:** None anticipated

**Workload Impact:** None anticipated

Certificate Guidelines  
**Types of Certificate Programs**

- 1) Certificate programs are defined as any program in which some form of recognition from San José State University is awarded to participants. Two general categories of certificate programs exist, Academic and Other (defined below) but only the former is the subject of this policy.
- 2) Academic certificate programs
  - a) **Definition:** Certificate programs are classified as “Academic” if students receive academic credit for any courses in the program.
  - b) Types of Academic certificate programs
    - i) Basic (undergraduate level)
      - (1) **Definition:** A basic certificate program provides opportunities for students to pursue specialized, often pre-professional, focused educational objectives that may be separate from a degree program.
      - (2) **Jurisdiction:** Basic certificate programs (stateside and self-support) are under the jurisdiction of the Undergraduate Studies (UGS) Committee and administered by the Office of Undergraduate Education (UE).
    - ii) Advanced (graduate level)
      - (1) **Definition:** An advanced certificate program offers post-baccalaureate students coursework leading to a specific, applied, focused goal.
      - (2) **Jurisdiction:** Advanced certificate programs (stateside and self-support) are under the jurisdiction of the Graduate Studies and Research (GS&R) Committee and administered by the College of Graduate Studies (CGS).
- 3) Other certificate programs
  - a) **Definition:** Certificate programs are classified as “Other” if no academic credit or grade is required to be awarded for completion of courses in the program. Professional development units are not considered academic credit.
  - b) **Jurisdiction:** College of Professional and Global Education (CPGE) oversees these certificates.

## General Guidelines for Academic Certificate Programs

- 1) Academic certificate programs must be credit bearing and must go through the curricular review process overseen by the University Curriculum Office.
- 2) Academic certificate programs should establish at least one advisor or director to oversee certificate programs within the unit.
- 3) All academic certificates must be conferred by the University and not by an individual department or program. University oversight includes listing in the catalog, evaluation and record of completion, and issuance of the certificate of completion.

## Specific to Academic Basic Certificate Programs

### Requirements

- 1) Basic certificate programs must include a minimum of 9 units and maximum of 18 units of coursework. Programs may require that all prerequisite coursework has been completed prior to enrolling in the basic certificate program. At least 6 units must be completed at SJSU. At least 50% of coursework counted toward the certificate must be letter graded.
- 2) Basic certificate programs may include lower-division and upper-division courses numbered 1 through 199.
- 3) A clearly stated assessment plan with learning outcomes must be included in the certificate proposal.
- 4) Basic certificates are available to matriculated students (regular or special session status).
- 5) Generally, a maximum of 33% of basic certificate units (e.g., 3 units for a 9-unit certificate) can be completed in non-matriculated status at SJSU with approval from the department or school. In some cases, a basic certificate may be completed entirely through Open University if the student has completed a Bachelor's degree and received approval from the department or school.
- 6) Unless otherwise stated in the catalog, courses taken as part of an SJSU Academic Certificate program can be applied to an approved major, minor, or emphasis program subject to SJSU policies. Unless otherwise stated in the catalog, courses taken for a major or minor may be applied to a basic certificate program upon approval from the basic certificate program advisor/director.
- 7) Students must have a minimum GPA of 2.0 in basic certificate coursework in order to be awarded a certificate. However, departments or comparable units may elect to set more stringent standards to ensure the quality of certificate holders with respect to the program.
- 8) The advisor/director of the program is responsible for verifying a student's satisfactory completion of the academic requirements established for the program and for forwarding a copy of the certificate completion form to the Office of the Registrar. The Office of the Registrar records the completion of the program on the student's transcript.

## Specific to Academic Advanced Certificate Programs

### Requirements

- 1) Advanced certificate programs must include a minimum of 9 units and maximum of 18 units of coursework. At least 50% of coursework counted toward the certificate must be letter graded.
- 2) Advanced certificate programs must consist of courses numbered 100 through 299 and/or 500-599, with at least 3 units of coursework numbered 200 or higher.
- 3) A clearly stated assessment plan with learning outcomes must be included in the proposal.
- 4) With the approval of the department or school, units may be applied to both an advanced certificate program and a graduate degree program offered by the department. A maximum of 3 units of coursework may be applied to two different advanced certificates as long as there are at least 9 unique units in each certificate.
- 5) All advanced certificate programs must be constructed solely with courses taken through San José State University.
  - a) Students must maintain a minimum GPA of 3.0 in all advanced certificate coursework, with no less than the grade of “C” in any course. A maximum of 4 units of coursework with a grade of “C” can be applied toward an advanced certificate.
  - b) A maximum of 4 units of coursework may be repeated. If a course is repeated, grade points and units from all attempts shall be included in the calculation of the student’s SJSU cumulative GPA and overall GPA, as described in F08-2.
  - c) Generally, a maximum of 33% of advanced certificate units (e.g., 3 units for a 9-unit certificate) can be completed in non-matriculated status at SJSU with approval from the department or school. In some cases, an advanced certificate may be completed entirely in non-matriculated status if the student has received approval from the department or school and the Associate Dean of Graduate Programs in the College of Graduate Studies.
  - d) A maximum of 30% of any graduate degree program units (e.g., 9 units for a 30-unit Master’s degree) can be completed from another institution or units from Open University (including advanced certificate courses) at SJSU with approval from the department or school.
  - e) The choice of grading requirements may have implications for transferability to degree programs.
- 6) These guidelines constitute minimum standards for advanced certificate programs; departments may propose additional requirements for approval by the GS&R Committee.
- 7) Departments/programs offering advanced certificate programs must have their advanced certificate students complete an intake form and submit an official transcript(s) (noting the completion of a U.S. bachelor’s degree from an accredited institution or the equivalent of a U.S. bachelor’s degree from an accredited and/or recognized institution from a foreign country). Students must have an undergraduate GPA of at least 2.5 (where A=4). A department or program can propose more

restrictive requirements subject to approval by the GS&R committee.

- a) Non-matriculated students who complete an advanced certificate program solely through Open University are required to send copies of this documentation to CPGE wherein this information will be retained and tracked by CPGE. Matriculated advanced certificate students that go through a formal university admissions review will have the said documentation retained and tracked at the Graduate Admissions and Program Evaluations (GAPE) office within CGS.
  - b) Departments/programs offering advanced certificate programs may specify subject matter and/or coursework prerequisites for entrance into the certificate program. Such prerequisites must be listed in the university catalog. Prerequisite courses or equivalent experience must demonstrate current and appropriate preparation as determined by the program. All other grading regulations of the graduate school apply to the courses in the certificate programs (e.g., the prohibition against taking graded classes pass/fail).
  - c) Where appropriate, some form of portfolio presentation, performance audition, or other evidence of specific competence may be required by departments. Such criteria will also be listed in the catalog.
- 8) The advisor/director of the certificate program is responsible for verifying information in the student's intake form and the student's satisfactory completion of the academic requirements established for the program and for forwarding the certificate completion form to GAPE. After a review and evaluation, GAPE then records the completion of the program onto the student's transcript.
- 9) Courses taken in the advanced certificate program expire 7 years from the point of grade posting. A maximum of 3 units may be revalidated in accordance with S17-7, if permitted by department or program policy, for an advanced certificate program. The student must have earned at least a "B" grade in a course to revalidate it. The department that offered the class must administer an assessment of the student's knowledge. The assessment could be an oral exam, written exam, research paper, or of any other kind of format approved by the department. The assessment must be evaluated by the faculty member who taught the original course, by one who has taught the course at another time, or by one who has reasonable knowledge of the course content. Note that any course(s) that may be applied to a graduate degree program are also subject to expiration 7 years from the date of original grade posting.

## Process for Proposing and Reviewing Academic Certificate Programs

- 1) All courses in a certificate program must undergo the normal course approval process prior to approval of the certificate course package.
- 2) Proposal Content:
  - a) SJSU College Dean Curricular Proposal Approval Form(s).
  - b) Brief statement of purpose.
  - c) Clearly stated learning outcomes mapped to coursework.
  - d) Catalog copy, which includes the following:
    - i. Brief statement of purpose.
    - ii. Admissions requirements.
    - iii. Course requirements.
    - iv. Any prerequisites for the certificate program.
    - v. Total number of units.
  - e) GPA needed to earn the certificate if other than a minimum of 2.0 for basic certificates and 3.0 for advanced certificates.
  - f) Program advisor.
  - g) For advanced certificates: number of units applicable (if any) to a degree and/or major depending upon matriculation status (with the caveat that the units may not be uniformly applied but require advisor consent).
  - h) For advanced certificates: if students are allowed to complete certificate courses through Open University, then the department/program must provide a justification for this pathway. The justification establishes that sufficient space will be available in the courses required for the certificate program.
    - i. This justification must comply with Executive Order #1099 which allows OU enrollment in state-supported courses on a space available basis after enrollment opportunities have been provided to state-support matriculated students.
    - ii. The justification must also comply with Executive Order #805 which states "enrollment or potential enrollment of non-matriculated students in state supported courses shall not be the basis of the addition for a course that would otherwise be canceled because of low enrollment of regular matriculated students".
    - iii. Departments/programs must go through a recertification process every five years that re-evaluates the justification for certificate completion through Open University. These recertification requests will need approval by the college deans, the Chair of GS&R, and the Provost. CGS will oversee this recertification process.
- 3) Submission process
  - a) Academic certificate programs (either basic or advanced) may be proposed by department, school or college curriculum committees.
  - b) Proposals may be submitted, reviewed, and approved at any time during the academic year.
  - c) For entry into the catalog, the approval must be registered with the University Curriculum Office according to published catalog deadlines.
- 4) Review process for new proposals

The reviewing bodies are responsible for timely review and approval of academic certificate programs:

- a) Proposals from either department or college level curriculum committees are submitted to the appropriate department chair(s) or school director(s) for review.
  - b) Upon approval, the department or school reviews are then submitted with a copy of the proposal to the appropriate curriculum committee(s) and college dean(s) for review and approval.
  - c) Upon approval of the college deans, a copy of the proposal (along with reviews from departmental/school and deans) is submitted to the Chair of the appropriate operating committee.
    - i. If the program contains any 200 level courses, the materials are referred to the Chair of the GS&R Committee for review.
    - ii. If the program does not contain any 200 level courses, the materials are referred to the Chair of the UGS Committee for review.
    - iii. During duty days, within one week, the committee Chair will determine if the Committee needs to review the proposal. If no full committee review is required, the proposal and accompanying reviews are submitted to the Provost via the University Curriculum Office with a statement from the Chair specifying that a review from their committee was not necessary.
  - d) If review by the appropriate operating committee is necessary, the Chair of the operating committee will send recommendations from the committees, along with the proposal and accompanying reviews, to the Provost via the University Curriculum Office.
  - e) The Provost makes the final decision on whether or not to approve the certificate program.
- 5) Review process for existing certificate programs
- a) Substitution, deletion, or addition of courses to the program will need to go through the minor program change process in the University Curriculum Office.
  - b) Certificates involving multiple programs will be assigned to a home department under which to be reviewed.