



**Authorization, Modification, and Assessment of Certificate Programs  
that Award Academic Credit # 380.103**

<b>INITIAL EFFECTIVE DATE:</b> January 19, 2000	<b>LAST REVISION DATE:</b> February 7, 2024	<b>RESPONSIBLE UNIVERSITY DIVISION/DEPARTMENT</b> Academic Affairs/Office of Academic Planning and Accountability
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**POLICY STATEMENT**

Academic units may create Certificate Programs which are structured selections of courses with a common base of interest from one or more disciplines combined into an area of concentration. Successful completion of a Certificate Program is entered on the student’s transcript and records. Two types of certificates are awarded at the undergraduate level: Academic Certificate (usually 18 credits) and Professional Certificate (usually 15 credits). Graduate certificate programs (usually 15 credits) do not carry any specific designations.

**Approval or Modification of Academic Credit Certificate Programs**  
Any certificate offered for academic credit under the auspices of the University must have the prior approval through the curriculum shared governance process which includes the Faculty Senate and the Provost. This process requires the admission criteria to be identified, including whether non-degree seeking students are eligible to apply. The deletion of an authorized certificate program likewise requires the prior approval of those same committees and offices.

**Assessment of Academic Credit Certificate Programs**  
Standalone certificates (admit non-degree seeking students) or gainful employment certificates (award financial aid) must create appropriate Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) and Program Outcomes (POs), as well as design applicable assessment methods to measure these outcomes as part of the curriculum approval process. These programs will be required to report the results of these outcomes each year, according to the assessment cycle, and must maintain enrollment records of all students. An application must be on file with the department, as well as a completed program of study.

All standalone certificates are required to complete assessment processes regardless of the number of non-degree seeking students enrolled in any given academic year. Additionally, each modality or delivery model (e.g., online, off-campus, off-shore) of a standalone or gainful employment certificate requires separate SLOs and POs. The outcomes and methods are expected to be the same or equivalent to the face-to-face delivery of the certificate program. However, data for the results and the improvement strategies driven by these data must relate specifically to the students taught under each modality.



**SCOPE**

This policy applies to all academic certificate programs and thus includes members of the University Community responsible for program delivery, evaluation, and review (faculty and college/school administrators).

**REASON FOR POLICY**

To define the criteria and process that governs the authorization and modification of certificates and to state the conditions under which certificate programs must be assessed.

**DEFINITIONS**

**Types of Academic Credit Certificates**

TERM	DEFINITIONS
Academic Certificate	Awarded by an academic unit to a student at the time of awarding a bachelor’s degree; or upon completion of the appropriate coursework to a student who already has a bachelor’s degree. Undergraduate academic certificate programs are generally 18 semester credits. An academic certificate shall not be awarded to a student who either does not possess a bachelor’s degree or does not complete a bachelor’s degree program. An academic certificate is to be interdisciplinary in nature, to the greatest extent possible.
Professional Certificate	Awarded by an academic unit to an individual who completes the appropriate coursework in the area of concentration. The professional certificate does not need to be interdisciplinary or associated with a degree program. Professional certificates are generally 15 credits.

**Types of Academic Credit Certificates offered to Non-Degree Seeking Students**

TERM	DEFINITIONS
Standalone Certificate	Standalone Certificate Program: A certificate that is available to non-degree seeking students. Non- degree seeking students must hold the department specified credentials prior to enrollment in the desired standalone certificate program. All standalone certificates are required to complete assessment processes regardless of the number of non-degree seeking students enrolled in any given academic year.
Gainful Employment Certificate	Gainful Employment Certificate Program: A standalone certificate program where students are granted financial aid eligible status. Given the stringent Federal oversight and reporting requirements



	of such certificates, thorough documentation is necessary for consideration of approval by the Office of the Provost.
<b>Modalities for Offering Academic Credit Certificates</b>	
<b>TERM</b>	<b>DEFINITIONS</b>
Online Certificate	See FIU 380.102 Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes Policy
Off-Campus/Off-Shore Certificate	See FIU 380.102 Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes Policy
<b>Assessment Requirements of Academic Credit Certificates open to Non-Degree Seeking Students</b>	
<b>TERM</b>	<b>DEFINITIONS</b>
Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)	Assessment outcomes and methods that focus on measuring student’s proficiency on competencies, skills, and behaviors required for the mastery of an academic program.
Program Outcomes (POs)	Assessment outcomes and methods that focus on efficiency measures such as completion rates, enrollment numbers, and other similar measures that do not pertain to student learning but are still pivotal to program success.

<b>ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES</b>
<p><u>Academic Unit</u>: The academic unit initiates proposals for new certificate through the established policies and procedures of the University Curriculum Committee of the Faculty Senate. If a unit chooses to open the certificate to non-degree seeking students, then the unit drafts an assessment plan detailing the student learning outcomes that graduates are able to demonstrate and the methods by which to assess their proficiency in these outcomes must be developed. Faculty are responsible for collecting and analyzing data as outlined in the assessment plans. Faculty utilize these data to create targeted improvement strategies to help strengthen students’ attainment of the related competencies. Finally, after one year, faculty are to provide follow-ups reports describing the implementation of the improvement strategies and provide documentation as evidence.</p> <p><u>College Dean</u>: The dean, or the dean's designee, approves the curriculum proposal for the certificate program. If the certificate is open to non-degree seeking students, the dean’s designee approves the accompanying assessment plan and report on an annual basis.</p> <p><u>Academic Planning and Accountability - Institutional Effectiveness (IE) team</u>: The IE team is responsible for the oversight of the assessment process for certificate programs open to non-degree-seeking students. The IE team provides guidance throughout the assessment process and is responsible for monitoring each academic unit’s compliance with submitting data and reports. The IE team tracks and reviews the completion of all assessment reports. To support</p>



this function, the IE team shall provide workshops and professional development opportunities to assist faculty in planning and reporting assessment data. The IE team also leads the University Assessment Committee whose members consist of representatives from each academic unit. The committee serves to disseminate important information related to assessment guidelines, deadlines, and professional development opportunities.

Provost: The Provost, or the Provost's designee, oversees the assessment process.

**RELATED RESOURCES**

**Authority**

Florida Board of Governors Regulation 8.011, New Academic Program Authorization (www.flbog.edu)

Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges, *Principles of Accreditation*, Principle 8 (sacscoc.org)

**Policies**

FIU 380.102 Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes Policy

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**HISTORY**

**Initial Effective Date**: This policy replaced and superseded Policy 2.11 “Authorization and Modification of Certificates” of the Academic Affairs Policies, Manuals and Handbooks. Effective January 19, 2000;

**Review Dates** (*review performed, no updates*): N/A

**Revision Dates** (*updates made to document*): October 15, 2009; April 20, 2019; November 17, 2020; February 7, 2024.