

# A-009 CERTIFICATE

The purpose of a certificate program is to allow students to gain specialized knowledge in a specific skill set area. A stand-alone certificate shall address workforce demand areas in a specialized content area. The certificates can serve the following purposes:

1. A stand-alone education credentialing option for non-degree-seeking students.
2. As a value-added credential to support students' majors.

## Requirements of a Certificate Program

For certificate programs to be approved, the following conditions must be met at either the undergraduate or graduate levels.

### Undergraduate

1. Undergraduate certificates must have a minimum of nine (9) credits and cannot exceed thirty (30) credits.
2. An undergraduate certificate less than nine (9) or more than thirty (30) credits in length may be approved when the academic program prepares an individual for employment and the length of the designation as a certificate is:
  - a. required by an employer, a licensing body or other regulatory agency, accrediting association, or board, or
  - b. changed based on a formal task analysis conducted within the previous three years and the results endorsed by an advisory committee.
3. At least fifty (50) percent of the courses in an undergraduate certificate must be upper-division courses.
4. The undergraduate certificate will require well-defined student learning outcomes.

### Graduate

1. The graduate certificate must have a minimum of nine (9) credits and cannot exceed thirty (30) credits.
2. The graduate certificate will require well-defined student learning outcomes.

## Admission to a Certificate Program

For a student to be enrolled in a certificate the following admission requirements must be met for undergraduate or graduate students.

### Undergraduate

High School Diploma, GED (General Educational Development), or equivalent degree

### Graduate

Bachelor's degree with a minimum Grade Point Average of 3.0, unless otherwise specified by the department.

## Awarding of a Certificate

For a certificate to be approved for student completion the following conditions must be met for undergraduate or graduate certificates.

For an undergraduate certificate to be awarded, the following conditions must be met.

1. Students must complete all the required courses.
  - a. Courses must include a minimum of two, non-duplicate elective courses from the student's major(s), major(s) awarded, minor(s), or other certificate(s).
  - b. Credits earned as part of the General Studies program may not be applied toward a certificate.
2. Students must achieve a cumulative GPA (Grade Point Average) of 2.00 for the certificate courses unless a higher GPA is required by the awarding program.
3. Students must apply for certificate completion through the degree check process:
  - a. For current degree-seeking students, a certificate can only be awarded in the same term as their degree or term after the degree has been awarded.
  - b. Students meeting the Certificate requirements will be awarded an official signed certificate from the Registration and Records Office.
  - c. Declared and awarded Certificates will appear on the student's official transcript.
4. A minimum of six (6) credits toward a certificate must be earned from SMSU as a residency requirement.

## Policy Notes:

For Financial Aid eligibility, a certificate must be a minimum of sixteen (16) credits (undergraduate) or nine (9) credits (graduate) offered over a minimum of fifteen (15) weeks, and receive United States Department of Education approval.

A certificate must comply with HLC (Higher Learning Commission) requirements, including the approval process for new certificates.

A review of new certificates must be done to determine if HLC approval is needed due to the number of new courses as part of the certificate.

## Related Documents

A-010, "Graduation Requirements (<http://catalog.smsu.edu/policies-procedures/graduation-requirements/>)"

## Policy History

**Date of Adoption:** September 24, 2024

**Date of Last Review:** September 24, 2024

### Date and Subject of Amendments

9/24/2024 - Policy created.