GRADUATE COUNCIL (GC)

Establishment of UC Merced Extension Non-Degree Programs

Approved by GC on November 27, 2017.
To be revisited by GC in three years from the date of approval: February 8, 2023.
Approved by UGC on January 3, 2018.

I. Purpose

This document describes the formal steps to be taken in preparation, transmittal, review, and implementation of proposals for the establishment or discontinuation of an Extension Non-Degree Program at UC Merced and is supplemented by the *University of California Standards & Guidelines for Certificate Programs*, February 2017 and *Preparing the UC Merced Extension Non-Degree Program Proposal.*

The policy and procedures outlined herein are consistent with Senate Regulation 811[1], and the WSCUC definition of non-degree programs[2].

II. Overview

A. The majority of courses offered by UC Merced Extension are unique to (offered only by) Extension. Of these, most are developed as part of Extension non-degree programs. The majority of non-degree programs are characterized by open access and self-directed matriculation, with the exception of teacher preparation programs. Students may opt to take all courses in a non-degree program and earn the applicable award of completion, or take single courses to develop specialized skills or knowledge in a particular area. Extension also offers courses that are not part of certificate programs that are taken for personal enrichment or to acquire a particular set of skills and knowledge in a content area.

B. Characteristics of Non Degree Programs and Credentials

1. Non-Degree Programs

- offer specialized knowledge and skills in a particular field
- are less extensive than a master's degree
- may or may not require application/admission process
- can be taken on a part-time basis to accommodate full-time workers
- typically take less than two years to complete

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[1] Curricula offered by the University Extension that lead to professional credentials or certificates shall be approved by the Dean of Extension and by the department or school or college concerned in accordance with the general policies established by the Committee on Courses of Instruction of the Division of the Academic Senate on the campus where each of the courses will receive departmental approval.

[2] A non-degree program consists of all of the following: Is a series of courses; carries academic credit from the offering institution; results in a credential of some kind (certificate, diploma, credential, etc.); results in a credential that is independent and not awarded as a result of completing an approved degree program. *Substantive Change Manual, A Guide to Substantive Change Policies and Procedures,* (WSCUC, 2017), 6.

- may be offered in an intensive, full-time format that permits students to complete a certificate during the summer, especially useful for recent graduates to provide specialized knowledge or skills that will increase their employability after graduation
- are developed and updated in consultation with advisory committees of distinguished professionals with academic training and professional experience in the area of study.
- are typically designed to cover important concepts, principles and theory as well as working knowledge and skills immediately applicable in the work place

When hiring instructors for courses that contribute to non-degree programs, Extension seeks experienced, appropriately professionals who have made significant contributions to their fields and are current leaders and innovators in their professions.

2. Credentials
   - Credential and authorization programs will have already been reviewed and approved by the governing authority, such as the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing. There are specific competencies that programs, such as the CTC, require to be included in their programs.

C. What should the Senate look for when asked to review a Non-Degree Program?
Input from professional advisory groups will help develop programs for which there is a current demand and cover content and skills that are valued by employers or are of interest to potential students. Non-Degree Programs should represent a content area that has academic credibility. The Academic Senate has the final review. Senate Committee members should ask questions if there are concerns about the credibility of a content area, intended audience, or selection of courses to be included in a non-degree program, or resource impacts on existing (non-Extension) academic programs.

III. Policy
A. Extension non-degree programs may originate from Extension, campus or an external entity, but the decision to recommend a program for approval to the Academic Senate is the purview of the Extension Dean.

B. For the purposes of this policy, an Extension Non-Degree Program is a sequence of courses constituting at least 120 credit bearing hours of coursework, and providing instruction in a coherent body of knowledge within a specialized field, leading to the attainment of a specified set of learning objectives and the award of a formal academic testimonial.

The academic level of non-degree programs may be post-baccalaureate or may correspond to undergraduate major sequences. They are usually characterized by open access and self-directed matriculation, with the exception of teacher preparation programs.

Courses in non-degree programs are primarily credit courses with student achievement evaluated by instructors. Non-credit courses may not fulfill the minimum academic units needed for the non-degree program, but may be required in addition to them.

C. The minimum scholarship standards for UC Merced Extension's non-degree programs will follow Academic Senate Regulation 634 which states "a student must obtain a grade-

point average of at least 2.0 for all courses attempted", though some non-degree programs may require a higher scholarship standard based on education, industry or licensure standards.

D. Program Completion: The curriculum rules and requirements define absolute conditions for award, not minimum requirements. Once all requirements are fulfilled, the student will be granted the appropriate award of completion.

1. The issuance of certificates and other formal awards of completion are to be recorded on student transcripts.
2. Certificates are issued for programs that require the approval of the Dean of U C Merced Extension and the Academic Senate and/or appropriate campus school or campus academic department. The actual certificate is 8.5" x 11" in size, has a GOLD university seal, describes the program as "Certificate in," or other approved terminology, and bears the signature of the Dean of U C Merced Extension.

E. Renewal and Discontinuation of Certificate Programs

1. The final decision to renew or discontinue a certificate program is rest with the Extension Dean, relying on guidance stemming from the review as well as other factors, such as profitability, as appropriate.
2. At the time a program is scheduled for discontinuation, all students currently enrolled in the program must be notified of the action as soon as possible by the Extension Registrar. Student advisement and consultation should ensure that student academic planning and program course scheduling reflects the needs of the program's target student audience in completing their academic body of work.

IV. Approval Process for Extension Non-Degree Programs

A. Each party in the process is expected to expedite consideration of pending proposals. Answers to questions that arise in the review process shall be sought from earlier reviewers and incorporated into the recommendations as needed. Revision to proposals may be approved without re-review by advisory parties but require approval by parties with authority to approve or reject the proposal.

B. Procedure

1. A proposal is initiated by the interested group. The initiator consults with the applicable Extension Continuing Educator, or Dean's designee for input and direction in proposal preparation and requirements. If the proposal is appropriate for Extension and projected to be fiscally viable, the Continuing Educator, or Dean's designee will endorse moving forward with the program proposal.
2. The program proposal is developed following the guidelines in *Preparing the UC Merced Extension Non-Degree Program Proposal*.
3. The WSCUC substantive change specialist is consulted to determine whether the proposed change requires external review by WSCUC after the proposal is approved on campus. If WSCUC review is required, the proposing group must prepare the required substantive change documentation for WSCUC review, in consultation with the campus WSCUC Accreditation Liaison Officer and WSCUC Substantive Change Specialist.
4. The program proposal is forwarded to the Extension Dean.

5. The Extension Dean provides a summary of support for the program including a description of the program, the courses, and advisory committee/board membership.
6. Full packet and approval from the Extension Dean is forwarded to the Divisional Council for transmittal to the appropriate committee for review and approval or request for additional information from the Extension Dean or dean's designee.
7. Once approved by the Division, and by WSCUC as relevant, Extension may proceed with advertising and implementing the program.