

## **Senate Committee on Academic Development**

Report to Senate - Meeting of February 12, 2013

### **Senate Policy on Certificates and Diploma Programs**

#### **Introduction/Background**

Academic credentials in the form of Certificates and Diplomas in a university context can serve a myriad of functions including: bridging to undergraduate (UG) or graduate (GRAD) degree programs; professional preparation or upgrading; providing specialized knowledge and skills that are deemed vital for opening new employment opportunities; providing opportunities for continuing education in specialized fields; and study complementary to degree studies. Certificate and Diploma Programs may be wholly offered by a single institution or may be offered in collaboration with other post-secondary institutions.

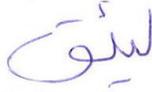
#### **Analysis and Discussion**

Certificate and Diploma Programs come in many forms including those that have full academic status, are Senate-approved and when successfully completed, are noted on a student's academic transcript as an academic credential. There are other forms of such programs that are offered in whole or in part outside the academic units, and which typically have no formal academic status yet often represent an important recognition of professional development. These latter programs, which do not require academic admission through the Registrar's Office, are not addressed here because they fall outside the traditional mandate of Senate and SCAD. Rather, the attached policy concerns the definitions, criteria and procedures for the development, evaluation, approval and monitoring of Certificate and Diploma Programs at Queen's University that are subject to Senate approval. Importantly, this policy has been developed to ensure consistency with the *Queen's University Quality Assurance Processes (QUQAPs)* passed by Senate in November 2010 and ratified by the Council of Ontario Universities Quality Council in April 2011. The intent is to provide Faculties and Schools with a framework around which they can creatively build new academic credentials in the form of Certificates and Diplomas appropriate to the needs of their UG and GRAD students that is consistent with the high standards of academic quality for which Queen's University is known.

## **Motion**

**that Senate approve the *Policy on Certificates and Diplomas Programs*, effective immediately and that the Senate Policy entitled *Certificate Programs at Queen's University* (approved May 1997) be rescinded.**

Respectfully submitted,



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Chair, Senate Committee on Academic Development

### **Committee Members:**

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## **Senate Policy on Certificate and Diploma Programs**

### **Introduction**

This policy applies to all Senate-approved Undergraduate (UG) and Graduate (GRAD) Certificates and Diploma Programs, which have full academic status and when successfully completed will be noted on a student's academic transcript as an academic credential. The status of all certificates and diplomas approved by Senate prior to adoption of this Policy will not be affected.

### **Definition of an Undergraduate Certificate**

Admission to a Queen's UG Certificate will be in accordance with the admission policies of an individual Faculty/School. An UG Certificate is a program of study coherently organized around clear learning objectives and outcomes, and typically having academic content equivalent to a minimum of half a year of full-time undergraduate study at Queen's (15.0 units of degree-credit courses or equivalent). An UG Certificate may be a stand-alone credential or, under prescribed conditions, it may be part of a set of laddered UG Diploma and/or Degree Programs (see below). Certificates may be focused primarily upon academic or professional development objectives, but typically should meet this minimum criterion of academic content.

### **Definition of a Graduate Certificate**

Admission to a Queen's GRAD Certificate requires an UG degree as a prerequisite. GRAD Certificates are often designed to provide advanced skills and technical/specialized knowledge in a specific field or area that may only peripherally relate to the graduate Programs in the parent academic unit(s). Alternatively, a GRAD Certificate may be a program of study coherently organized around clear learning objectives and outcomes. A GRAD Certificate may be a stand-alone credential or, under prescribed conditions, it may be part of a set of laddered GRAD Diploma and/or Degree Programs (see below). A GRAD Certificate Program has an UG degree as a prerequisite and would typically have an academic content equivalent to a minimum of three courses (9.0 units of graduate degree-credit courses or equivalent).

### **Definition of an Undergraduate Diploma**

Admission to a Queen's UG Diploma will be in accordance with the admission policies of an individual Faculty/School. An UG Diploma is a program of study that involves a significant body of academic work coherently organized around clear learning objectives and outcomes typically having academic content equivalent to a minimum of one year of full-time undergraduate study at Queen's (30.0 units of degree-credit courses or equivalent). An UG Diploma may be a stand-alone credential or, under prescribed circumstances, it may be part of a laddered set of programs leading to an UG Degree (see below). UG Diplomas may be focused primarily upon academic or professional development objectives, but typically all should meet this minimum criterion of academic content.

### **Definition of a Graduate Diploma**

Admission to a Queen's GRAD Diploma requires an UG degree as a prerequisite. A GRAD Diploma may be a stand-alone credential or, under prescribed circumstances, it may be part of a laddered set of Programs leading to a Master's degree (see below). A GRAD Diploma typically has the academic

content equivalent to a minimum of four courses (12.0 units of graduate degree-credit courses or equivalent), and may take one of three forms as previously defined by OCGS and now adopted by the Quality Assurance Framework:

**Type 1 Diploma:** Offered when a candidate admitted to a Master's Program leaves the program after completing a specified proportion of the requirements. Students are not admitted directly to these programs.

**Type 2 Diploma:** Offered in conjunction with a Master's (or Doctoral) Degree, the admission to which requires that the candidate be already admitted to the Master's (or Doctoral) Program. A Type 2 Diploma may be proposed by one or more Academic Units and represents an additional, often interdisciplinary, academic credential.

**Type 3 Diploma:** A stand-alone, direct-entry Program, generally developed by an Academic Unit already offering a related Master's (and sometimes Doctoral) degree, and designed to meet the needs of a particular clientele or market.

### **Criteria for Establishment of a UG/GRAD Certificate or Diploma Program with Academic Status at Queen's University**

A Queen's Senate-approved Certificate or Diploma Program with academic status must be of a quality that meets the academic standards as understood through the COU Quality Assurance Framework and articulated in the Senate-approved *Queen's University Quality Assurance Processes (QUQAPs)*. Consequently, it must satisfy the following criteria:

- Follows the policies and procedures of the Faculty/School in which it is conceived and, in the case of GRAD Programs, the School of Graduate Studies (SGS)
- Is approved by Senate following *QUQAPs* for new programs (see below)
- Has clearly defined learning objectives and outcomes appropriate to university-level teaching and research
- Consists of university degree-credit courses(or equivalent) that may include those developed specifically for the Program but nevertheless, must be at a level of intellectual rigour comparable to those found in degree Programs in the same or similar disciplines
- Courses should normally be taught by instructors qualified to teach degree level material. This capability may be ascertained by considering the professional work experience and professional development learning, as well as the academic credentials of the instructor
- Represents the academic content as defined above which may include classroom and/or on-line course work, special projects and/or practicum placements or combinations thereof
- Has clearly articulated:
  - admission requirements
  - program level expectations and learning outcomes
  - grading systems and completion requirements for individual courses and for the Program as a whole
  - budget and accompanying narrative describing anticipated revenues and expenses
- Specifies conditions, if any, for laddering and advanced credit options (see below)
- Includes the word Certificate or Diploma in the Program name
- Is subject to a cyclical review following *QUQAPs* every 8 years, normally in conjunction with the related degree Programs
- Is easily accessible and accurately described on the appropriate Queen's webpage on Academic Programs

### **Credit Towards Degree Program Studies**

Where appropriate and desired by a Faculty or School, new proposals for UG and GRAD Certificate and/or Diploma Programs may be developed in such a way as to offer a 'laddered' pathway to successively advanced academic credentials with the possibility, for example, of a Senate-approved Certificate counting towards a Diploma that counts towards a Degree. Thus, Programs may be developed and structured such that accredited courses included in a Senate-approved Certificate/Diploma Program can be used for credit towards a Diploma/Degree Program of studies in accordance with the academic rules and procedures specified by the Faculty/School(s) offering the Diploma/Degree. Similarly, the academic credit courses included in a Diploma Program may be used for credit towards a Degree Program of studies in accordance with the normal academic rules specified by the Faculty/School offering the Degree. Such credit toward an advanced credential will normally be given only when all the requirements of the Certificate or Diploma Program are satisfied.

### **Regulations Regarding Credit Transfers from One Academic Program to a Second Program**

A proposal for a new UG or GRAD Certificate/Diploma Program with academic status must be accompanied by a clear statement on the number of transfer credits (units) that can be counted towards an affiliated or concurrent academic (degree/diploma/certificate) Program.

### **Certificate and Diploma Program Approval Processes**

Proposals for new UG and GRAD Certificate/Diploma Programs will be subject to approval processes as outlined in the *Queen's University Quality Assurance Processes (QUQAPs)*. All Senate-approved UG and GRAD Certificates and Diplomas will be reported to the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU) for approval or information.

### **Program Review Process**

Senate-approved UG and GRAD Certificates and Diplomas with academic status are subject to *QUQAPs* and consequently, must undergo a cyclical program review (CPR) process every 8 years, normally in conjunction with the CPR of the related degree Program(s).

### **Awarding of Senate-Approved Certificates and Diplomas**

Successful completion of a Senate-approved UG and/or GRAD Certificate / Diploma Program with academic status will be recorded on a student's academic transcript. Graduates will be invited to receive their Certificate or Diploma at convocation.