

# POLICY AND PROCEDURES FOR GRADUATE CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS Michigan State University

In recent years at Michigan State University, the interest in and demand for graduate certificate programs has increased. These graduate certificate programs are constructed in selected fields as complements to degree programs or as distinct offerings. The issuance of a graduate certificate signifies that the certificate holder has completed a set of course work or specified professional training or possesses specified skills or competency levels. The unit defines these courses, professional training, specific skills, or competency levels and how they are met and/or assessed.

**At Michigan State University, there are FOUR types of graduate certificate programs.**

Those that are:

- directly related to a degree program and are transcriptable;
- distinct entities, not related to a degree program and are transcriptable;
- distinct entities, not related to a degree program but are not transcriptable;
- distinct entities at the University level not related to a degree program, and are transcriptable.

## Type 1

If a graduate certificate program is **directly related to a degree program** as part of the degree program's requirements, then:

- it includes course work, or specified professional training, skills, or competency levels;
- it is "transcriptable" (eligible to be listed on a student's transcript);
- it appears as "Certification for..." on the transcript;
- it must be approved via the academic governance system using the *Request for a New Academic Program* or *Request for Changes in an Academic Program* form.  
See the University Curriculum and Catalog web page for information: <http://www.reg.msu.edu/ucc/ucc.asp>

## Type 2

If a graduate certificate program is a **distinct entity not related to a degree program**, and is transcriptable then:

- it includes course work, or specified professional training, skills, or competency levels;
- it must be approved via the academic governance system using the *Request for a New Academic Program* or *Request for Changes in an Academic Program* form. See the University Curriculum and Catalog web page for information: <http://www.reg.msu.edu/ucc/ucc.asp>;
- it appears as "Graduate Certificate Program", followed by the name of the program on the transcript;
- its students are enrolled at the Graduate Certification (GC) level or in a graduate degree program;
- the minimum number of credits required is 9; more than half of the credits of the total required for a graduate certificate must be taken in courses at the 500 and 600 levels or 800 and 900 levels.
- a maximum of 9 credits earned in transfer at the Graduate Certification (GC) level may be applied toward a graduate degree, with the exception for College of Education students who may apply a maximum of 12;
- Some colleges with programs that require more than 30 credits for the master's degree may apply more than 9 credits toward the master's degree but not more than 30% of the total number of credits required for the master's degree. Credits applied to a master's degree are not eligible to be applied to any other graduate degree program.
- Each program may decide how many credits of graduate course work taken at the Graduate Certification (GC) level (up to 9 semester credits or for the College of Education 12 semester credits) may be transferred from institutions external to Michigan State University and may be applied to a Graduate Certificate.
- There is no limit to the number of credits taken at the Graduate Certification (GC) level at MSU that can be applied to graduate degree programs.

## Type 3

If a graduate certificate program is a **distinct entity not related to a degree program**, but is not transcriptable, then:

- it includes course work, or specified professional training, skills, or competency levels;
- it must be approved by the unit responsible for its administration, but does not require University-level approval;
- only its individual courses, if they are approved MSU courses, are transcriptable;
- its students are enrolled in the Lifelong Education (LE) enrollment status or in a graduate degree program;
- a maximum of 9 credits earned in transfer at the Graduate Certification (GC) level may be applied toward a graduate degree, with the exception in the College of Education where a maximum of 12 credits may be applied;
- Some colleges with programs that require more than 30 credits for the master's degree may apply more than 9 credits toward the master's degree but not more than 30% of the total number of credits required for the master's degree. Credits applied to a master's degree are not eligible to be applied to any other graduate degree program.
- Each program may decide how many credits transferred from institutions external to MSU may be applied to a graduate certificate program that is part of the master's degree.

## Type 4

If a graduate certificate program is a **distinct entity at the University level not related to a degree program** then it:

- requires specified professional training, skills, or competency levels;
- is transcriptable as a graduate certificate program;
- appears on the transcript as "University Graduate Certification in..."
- must be approved by the academic unit offering the certificate and by The Graduate School. An example is the "University Graduate Certification in College Teaching."