

(1) PROPOSED NEW TEXT

Requirements for a graduate certificate

(Approved by University Faculty in 2001-02 Academic Year)

A graduate certificate usually has an applied, career-oriented focus and is designed to enhance existing skills or develop new levels of expertise in a given field. These certificates recognize the completion of a set of graduate courses and appear on the Lehigh transcript. A certificate can be applied for and earned by non-degree students. In contrast with the master's and doctoral degrees, a graduate certificate is not formally 'awarded' at one of the two commencement exercises, however, a graduate certificate may be earned during the course of study for a master's or doctoral degree, and will be listed on the student transcript. Similar to graduate degrees, certificates are approved and overseen by the Graduate and Research Committee.

A graduate certificate is distinct from any form of certification granted by an external certifying agency and, despite the similarity in names, **the two types of certificates** should not be confused. Over a period of time, more than one certificate may be earned.

A Graduate Certificate may be:

1. An extension of an existing degree (master's, specialist, or doctorate).
2. A free-standing post-baccalaureate academic experience.
3. Added to or incorporated within a more comprehensive degree.

Requirements

The standards below represent the minimum requirements for Lehigh graduate certificate programs. Such certificates can consist of a number of new courses, a repackaging of existing courses, or a combination of the two. The suggested standards address such items as the number of credits, time limits for completion, transferability of credits, as well as admissions and completion requirements. These standards conform to graduate certificates at peer institutions, incorporate policies recommended by the Council of Graduate Schools and reflect academic standards in force at Lehigh.

A Graduate Certificate:

- Consists of a minimum of 12 credits, taken beyond the bachelor's degree;
- ~~Consists of any combination of new and existing courses, subject to program development;~~
- Has a maximum of 6 credits at the 200 or 300-level, with the remainder at the 400-level;
- Courses taken at the 200 level must be outside the primary field of study;
- No course in which the grade earned is less than C- is credited toward the certificate;
- Must be earned post-baccalaureate and must be for credit (audits do not count);

- Must be completed in 4 years or less, or within the allotted time for the student's concurrent degree program. In the case that a student cannot complete the certificate in 4 years, the student must petition the Standing on Graduate Students committee to extend the time to completion.

Admissions Criteria:

- Lehigh's minimum criteria for admission to a graduate program apply, unless a department or program sets higher standards; these criteria include:
 - A minimum of a bachelor's degree or equivalent and a minimum GPA of 2.75 are required;
 - ~~GRE or other test scores are not required for admission to the certificate program (but may be required for continuing towards a master's or higher degree);~~
 - Students must demonstrate English language proficiency, consistent with university policies for graduate programs;
 - Submission of a complete application and an official undergraduate transcript are required (some programs may require additional documentation);
 - Applications can be reviewed with unofficial transcripts, but an official transcript is required to formally complete the application and before they can receive any transcript or grade report;
 - An application fee is required.

If a student has already matriculated into a graduate program at Lehigh, they may elect to add a graduate certificate by formally requesting that the program ~~to~~ be added to their curriculum through the prescribed university process ~~via the curriculum change form~~. Permissions will be granted by the College in which the program of study is located. If the certificate is intercollege, the program director will grant permission.

Transfer Credit:

A maximum of up to three credits taken at the graduate level elsewhere may be transferred from an accredited graduate college or graduate university to a certificate program. All courses must be assigned a grade of "B" or better to be eligible, and have not been used toward any prior degree. The credits must be completed within four years of first enrollment into a Lehigh program. University transfer credit procedures apply.

Post-completion coursework:

In some cases, a certificate student may want to take an additional course beyond the certificate program. If the student is still an active student completing their certificate at the time of registration, the student should petition the Standing on Graduate Students committee to be granted permission for enrollment beyond the credits required for certificate completion. If the student is not an active student at the time of registration, the student would need to complete a new non-degree student application. This would need to be done prior to the start of classes in the academic term of question.

Student Status:

Unless already matriculating in a degree program, applicants to a certificate program will be admitted as non-degree students.

Graduate certificate students who have not already been admitted to a degree program are not guaranteed admission to a degree program and must apply and be admitted with regular status before continuing towards a master's, specialist or doctoral degree.

Current undergraduate students may take graduate level courses toward a certificate following the guidelines outlined in 3.21.1. ~~Students of Lehigh University who are within a few credit hours of meeting the requirements for a baccalaureate degree may, with the special approval of the Standing on Graduate Students committee, enroll for a maximum of 6 credits for graduate credit towards a certificate. They Lehigh undergraduate students may apply course credits taken as an undergraduate toward a certificate under the following conditions:~~

1. The course credits may not have been submitted as part of the requirements for **their undergraduate a previous** degree.
2. A maximum of 6 credit hours taken while an undergraduate (in 300 or 400 level courses) may be used towards a certificate program.

For the final conferral of a graduate certificate, the student must be enrolled **at the graduate level** for at least one full semester or summer term beyond their undergraduate degree.

Requirements for Completion of Certificate:

- Completion of the minimum number of credits specified by program.
- No more than one grade below B-.
- All other university requirements apply, such as deadlines and fees.
- All work must be completed in 4 years or in the time allotted for a concurrently enrolled degree.
- A student may seek a formal leave of absence for up to one year. This would add up to one year (the equivalent of the leave of absence timeline) to the time limit to complete the certificate.

Transferability:

- Credits earned towards a certificate may be accepted as part of a master's or higher program, as determined by the program, and may not be used to satisfy multiple certificates.
- All certificate courses to be credited toward a master's degree must be done through or approved by the appropriate academic unit of Lehigh University.
- Certificates may be stacked or combined to earn a degree, if the degree requirements, including grade requirements, are met by doing so. A maximum of 12 credits earned towards a certificate may be applied to a masters degree. Credits can only be applied to a single master's degree or a single PhD. Students must formally apply to the degree program that they intend to use certificate stacking towards.

- Normal time limits for completion of a degree program apply and are not extended by inclusion of graduate certificate courses. That is, the program into which the courses are to transfer must be completed according to university regulations (per R&P sections 3.22 and 3.23).
- All certificate courses to be credited towards a master's or higher degree program must be taken within the prescribed timeframe of the degree.

(2) PROPOSED NEW TEXT WITH MARKUP

All new text. The 2002 text was never included in R&P, and we began new.

(3) ORIGINAL TEXT

All new text. The 2002 text was never included in R&P, and we began new.

(4) EXPLANATION FOR NEEDED CHANGE

Lehigh has offered graduate certificates in several colleges for many years. These are Lehigh credit bearing, Lehigh credential-linked programs that have not been subject to formal R&P. While they go through the same process as standard course/curriculum additions; they are unique in their timelines and restrictions.

(5) EXPLANATION FOR WHY CHANGE ADDRESSES ISSUE

The added language provides a set of rules associated with certificate programs, including rules for Colleges and students. It builds a standard around certificate programs and their use in graduate studies at Lehigh.

(6) PROPOSAL HISTORY

- Graduate Associate Deans review language for context around college curriculum, September 30, 2025
- Sabrina Jedlicka, in collaboration with the Registrar's Office, drafted the proposal, August 2025
- GRC first review, October 7, 2025
- Edits made based on GRC Suggestions, October 15, 2025
- Circulated to chairs, October 22, 2025
- Edits made based on Chair Suggestions, November 10, 2025
 - Feedback was to align 200 and 300 level course options with Master's program requirements.
- Circulated to EdPol, November 11, 2025

- EdPol reviewed, and changes incorporated.
- Circulated back to GRC, January 27, 2026
- First reading, Faculty Senate, March 6, 2026
- Changes incorporated based on first reading, March 19, 2026

(7) PROPOSED IMPLEMENTATION DATE

End of AY25-26, to meet deadlines for a final vote at the May 2026 BOT meeting

(8) IMPACTS ON OTHER PARTS OF R&P

R&P numbering in Section 3 would need to be edited to accommodate this new section. We recommend numbering this 3.22, Requirements for a Graduate Certificate, which would fall ahead of Requirements for master's degree (current section 3.22) and Requirements for PhD (current section 3.23). Each italicized header above would be 3.22.1, 3.22.2, etc., to align with similar sections in R&P.