**Appendix - C: Graduate Certificate Programs**

[Home](https://www.grad-college.iastate.edu/) > Graduate College Handbook

[Return to Table of Contents](https://www.grad-college.iastate.edu/handbook/)

**C.1 What is a Graduate Certificate**

A graduate certificate provides a mechanism for bestowing formal recognition of focused graduate study in a specialized area that is less comprehensive than required for a master's degree. At Iowa State University, a graduate certificate may be earned either before, after, or concurrently with the master’s or doctoral degree. As such, the standards of admission and the standards to which a certificate student is held are equivalent to those expected of a master's student.

Candidates for a graduate certificate must be admitted to the desired graduate certificate program in the Graduate College. All courses for a graduate certificate must be acceptable for graduate credit and each graduate certificate must require at least 12 graduate credits. A graduate supervisor will be appointed to oversee the certification for each student.

If a person who receives a graduate certificate decides to continue for a graduate degree, the person needs to seek approval from that degree program. Credits earned for the graduate certificate may also be used to meet degree requirements for the graduate degree if approved by the Program of Study Committee.

## C.2 Academic Procedures for Graduate Certificates

## Application

* An undergraduate student wishing to pursue a concurrent Graduate Certificate must submit the [Concurrent Application Form](https://www.grad-college.iastate.edu/documents/forms/Application_for_an_ISU_Undergraduate_Student_Wishing_to_Pursue_a_Concurrent_Graduate_Certificate_or_Graduate_Degree.pdf).
* A new student must apply for admission to the certificate program using the [Application for Admission](https://www.admissions.iastate.edu/apply/online/).
* A graduate student wishing to pursue a Certificate in addition to a Graduate Degree must submit the [corresponding form](https://secure.grad-college.iastate.edu/certificate-in-addition-to-degree/).
* At the time of admission to a graduate program, known certificate-seeking students will be designated as “Certificate” or “CRT” for the Degree entry on the Graduate Admission Evaluation form.
* Students pursuing **only** a graduate certificate may **not** be awarded a graduate assistantship.

## Supervision and Program of Study

* Each certificate program has a Director of Certificate Studies (DOCS) – the equivalent of the DOGE for a graduate major.
* Certificate students do not have a POS committee, but do have a supervising professor that can be the same as the Director of Certificate Studies. The supervising professor must be a member of the graduate faculty and of the program.
* To receive a certificate, students must submit the [Online Certificate POS](https://secure.grad-college.iastate.edu/certificate-program-of-study/) for approval.
* The regular Graduate College course rules apply to certificates:
	+ A student must have a graduate GPA of 3.00 or better and no course with a grade below a C may be applied to the POS.
	+ Any transfer credits used must have B or better grades, have been taken as a graduate student for graduate credit, and be from an accredited university. Individual programs will determine the maximum transfer credits they will allow for the certificate.
	+ Transfer courses must be completed prior to submitting the POS and a transcript submitted to the Graduate College for review.
* Time limits for graduate certificate programs follow the same 7-year time limit that master’s programs employ*.*

## Completion

* Students must submit a completion form within two years after completing the final required course in the certificate program of study
* To withdraw from a graduate certificate program, email your Director of Certificate that you are no longer actively pursuing the certificate
* When a student has completed all requirements, the program will submit a [Certificate Completion Form](https://www.grad-college.iastate.edu/documents/forms/Certificate_Completion.pdf) [Certificate Completion Form](https://www.grad-college.iastate.edu/documents/forms/Certificate_Completion.pdf) signed by the DOCS to the Graduate College. The Graduate College will then certify that all requirements have been completed satisfactorily and inform the Registrar and the Graduation Office.
* The Registrar will add a notation to the permanent record (transcript) indicating that a Graduate Certificate in \_\_\_\_\_ was granted on a specified date and issue a printed ISU graduate certificate.
* The Registrar will provide a certificate document to each student after courses have been satisfactorily completed.
* Following completion of the certificate program, a hold will be placed on future registration unless a student has been approved to pursue a graduate degree.

**C.3 Establishing a Certificate Program**

The first step in establishing a new graduate certificate is the preparation of a proposal by qualified group of faculty (a Word version of the proposal below is also available on the Graduate College website at <https://www.grad-college.iastate.edu/faculty-and-staff/forms/>). If the proposed program will be focused in an existing department, program or college, the proposal should be routed through the corresponding curriculum committees. College curriculum committees will forward the appropriately amended proposal to the Graduate College Catalog and Curriculum Committee. Proposals for interdisciplinary programs should also be routed through the cooperating departmental and college committee before being submitted to the Graduate College Catalog and Curriculum Committee.

Required Background Information

1. Name of the proposed graduate certificate.
2. Name of the departments and/or programs involved.
3. Name of contact person.
4. Need for the graduate certificate.
5. Objective of the graduate certificate.
6. General description of the graduate certificate.
7. Graduate certificate requirements including:
	1. Admissions standards and prerequisites for the certificate program.
	2. Courses and seminars
8. General description of the resources currently available and future resource needs:
	1. A list of supporting faculty members including a brief description of their expertise relating to the graduate certificate.
	2. The effects of any new courses on faculty workload.< /li >
	3. Other resources required for the program including graduate assistants, laboratories and other facilities, supplies, etc.
9. Relationship of the proposed graduate certificate to the strategic plans of the department, college and the university.
10. Plan for periodic review of the certificate program.

**C.4 Programs Offering Graduate Certificates**

Certifications can be found on the [master programs page](https://www.grad-college.iastate.edu/academics/programs/apprograms.php).