

**UC DAVIS GRADUATE COUNCIL POLICY**  
**Graduate Academic Certificate Program (GAC)**  
**Policy and Proposal Guidelines**  
**Approved – January 25, 2007**  
**Revised – January 2008; March 15, 2010**

**GC2007-01 (rev. 02)**

This document includes the following information:

- Definition of a graduate academic certificate program
- Requirements for a graduate academic certificate program
- Proposal guidelines for the creation of a new graduate academic certificate program

## **I. Definition of a Graduate Academic Certificate Program (GAC)**

A graduate academic certificate program is a structured sequence of courses and requirements that focuses on a specialty or area of expertise not offered by a regular degree program and has been reviewed and approved by the Graduate Council.

UC Davis offers graduate academic certificate programs that make use of regular UC Davis courses and are taken by currently enrolled UC Davis graduate students, professional students, and post-doctoral scholars. They are administered by a UC Davis instructional unit (professional school, department, graduate group or a designated emphasis program). GAC's consist of a minimum of 12 units of graduate level instruction. A GAC cannot be granted until a student has completed a minimum of three quarters in full-time resident study at the University of California with a grade-point average of at least 3.0.

## **II. Requirements for a Graduate Academic Certificate Program**

The GAC will have: a faculty Chair, executive committee, advisers, a staff coordinator, curriculum, admissions policy, and degree completion requirements. If the certificate is offered through an approved graduate degree program, the faculty, chair and committees shall be the same for the certificate program and the degree program; administration of the GAC may be delegated to a subcommittee appointed for that purpose by the graduate degree program's Executive Committee or Graduate Program Committee.

### **1. Faculty**

The curriculum of the GAC shall be offered by faculty organized in a manner to provide graduate level instruction (professional school, department, graduate group, or a designated emphasis program). These faculty members must hold appropriate instructional titles at the University of California, must have research and teaching expertise in the area of the certificate program, and must be eligible for graduate program membership as defined by Graduate Council policy.

### **2. Chair**

The Chair of the GAC is the Chair of the instructional unit offering the program.

### **3. Executive Committee**

The GAC shall have an executive committee, chaired by the GAC Chair and consisting of at least two additional faculty members elected by the membership.

If the GAC is offered through a graduate degree program, the executive committee shall be the same for the GAC and the degree program; administration of the GAC may be delegated to a subcommittee appointed for that purpose by the graduate degree program's Executive Committee or Graduate Program Committee.

The Executive Committee shall be responsible for establishing the curriculum, including

requirements for admission, monitoring students' progress, and recommending the awarding of the certificate to the Dean of Graduate Studies after the student has completed all requirements.

#### **4. Curriculum**

The GAC curriculum shall consist of a minimum of 12 graduate-level instructional units. Accordingly, a certificate should not add more than one quarter to the student's time-to-degree.

#### **5. Degree Conferral Process**

Successful completion of all requirements for an approved GAC program is recognized by (1) notation on a student's transcript and (2) the awarding of a certificate with established language (Systemwide Academic Senate Regulation 735)

<http://senate.universityofcalifornia.edu/manual/rpart3.html> and the gold seal of the University of California.

#### **6. Program Evaluation**

Evaluation of the academic quality of the graduate academic certificate program will be by Graduate Council's Program Review Committee. A new GAC will be reviewed 5 years after admitting its first students. Justification for continuation of the program is an important part of this first review, due to the 7-year "sunset clause" that applies to GAC's (see below). Thereafter, the GAC will be reviewed on a 7-year review cycle. GAC's will be reviewed in conjunction with the instructional unit offering the program. The review will be initiated by Graduate Council, and programs will be notified one year in advance of the review.

#### **7. Sunset Clause**

Approval of a new GAC includes a 7-year "sunset clause." That is, admissions to the GAC will end automatically after 7 years unless continuation is requested and justified in the program's self-review document as part of the program review process. The rationale for the sunset clause is that GAC's should reflect current needs and changing trends in education, and thus they may be short-lived.

### **III. Proposal Guidelines for the Creation of a New Graduate Academic Certificate Program**

#### **A. Review and Approval Procedures**

Faculty considering creation of a new GAC should agree on a definition and description of the GAC and meet with the Dean of Graduate Studies (or his/her designee) and the Graduate Council Analyst to discuss the nature of the graduate academic certificate program, the mechanism and format of proposal preparation, and the processes of review, approval, and implementation.

##### **1. Graduate Studies Preview**

Proposals for new GAC's should be "previewed" by the Dean of Graduate Studies (or his/her designee) and the Graduate Council Analyst, to ensure that the proposal contains the necessary information. The purpose of this step is to identify problems that may slow the formal proposal review process.

##### **2. Graduate Council Approval**

Proposals are formally reviewed by Graduate Council's Educational Policy Committee prior to submission to the Graduate Council for final campus approval.

#### **B. Proposal Format**

If the proposal is offered through a graduate degree program, a cover letter from the Chair of the program which indicates the date and supporting vote of the program members should accompany the proposal. The proposal should be prepared in the following format:

**NAME OF GAC PROPOSED**  
**DATE OF PROPOSAL**  
**Graduate Council Approval: \_\_\_\_\_**

**I. Description of the Graduate Academic Certificate Program**

Provide a brief description of the program's purpose and distinctive features, including target audience. This description should explain how it is related to existing academic programs, and how this program differs from others offered by the Davis campus.

**II. Description of the Academic Nature of the GAC**

This description will include several elements:

**A. Administration and Affiliated Faculty**

If the certificate is offered through an approved graduate degree program, the affiliated faculty and committees shall be the same for the GAC and the degree program (administration of the GAC may be delegated to a subcommittee as noted above). The Chair shall be the same for the GAC and the degree program.

**1. Administration**

Identify the roles and responsibilities and participants in the following positions:

- Faculty Chair
- Executive Committee *\*Note: GACs offered through a graduate program should indicate if the graduate program Executive (or Graduate Program) Committee will fill this role, or whether the graduate program intends to create a GAC subcommittee.*
- Program Staff

**2. Affiliated Faculty**

Provide a summary and a roster of faculty who intend to participate in the GAC. Request a letter from each faculty member who intends to participate. This letter should indicate the intent to participate and agreement to participate in GAC functions such as teaching and/or administration. Faculty support for the GAC is considered critical. The level of participation of affiliated faculty will be a major factor considered in graduate academic certificate program reviews.

If the GAC is offered by a graduate degree program, supporting letters from individual faculty in that program are not required; a cover letter documenting a faculty vote in favor of the administration of the GAC by the graduate program is sufficient.

**B. Admissions Criteria**

Describe the criteria used to determine admission of students to the GAC, the expected audience for the program, and the number of students expected to request admission each year.

Include the application process for students with due dates and a timeline for acceptance. Describe the make-up of the Admissions Committee for the GAC. *\*Note: GACs offered through a graduate program should indicate if the graduate program Admissions Committee will fill this role, or whether the graduate program intends to create a GAC subcommittee to fill this role.*

**C. Certificate Requirements**

The proposed requirements and curriculum should be described to include the following:

**1. Required Courses:**

List required courses and the unit value of each. Indicate whether the required courses

are new or existing courses. For new courses, include the course description and indicate whether these have been submitted online through the Web-based course approval system. Any new courses required for a GAC must be reviewed and approved by the Graduate Council Courses Committee and the Academic Senate Committee on Courses of Instruction.

The GAC curriculum shall consist of a minimum of 12 graduate-level instructional units. Accordingly, a certificate should not add more than one quarter to the student's time-to-degree.

Should any required course be offered by an instructional unit that is not the administrating program, then an MOU from that instructional unit stating that they have reviewed the GAC proposal and agree to allow GAC students to enroll in the course is required.

The required curriculum will be reviewed as part of the proposal review process, and any subsequent changes must be submitted to and approved by Graduate Council. Include a sample schedule if needed to show how a student will integrate the certificate program requirements with regular program requirements.

## **2. Elective Courses**

List allowable elective courses and their unit value. Indicate whether the elective courses are new or existing courses. For new courses, include the course description, and indicate whether these have been submitted online for review.

## **3. Other Requirements**

Identify any other requirements beyond coursework.

## **D. Student Advising and Monitoring Progress**

- 1. Student Advising:** Include a description by which the GAC will oversee the academic progress of students in the program. For example, describe the role of the Graduate Adviser and/or advising committee if a part of this program.
- 2. Monitoring Student Progress:** How will student progress be monitored? Include time-line, process, and student notification in the event of unsatisfactory progress.
- 3. Informing Students:** Information should be provided to incoming students if they are eligible for the certificate program concerning: a) when in the student's graduate career they should start taking classes, b) if there is a deadline by which they must apply, and c) who they should contact with any questions regarding the certificate program. If the certificate program is available to students outside of the graduate program, some form of advertisement or open information session should be put in place so that **all** eligible students are informed. Describe how you this will be done.

## **E. Resources**

The proposal should address the issue of resources required to run the GAC. If no additional resources are required, this should be stated. If additional resources are required, they should be described, and the source of support for these resources should be identified. Resources include the administrative support for record keeping (for example, lists of current and former students and current faculty members) and preparation of materials required for the periodic reviews by Graduate Council's Program Review Committee.

*Include a letter of support or MOU from the appropriate academic dean(s) that addresses resource issues.*