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Description automatically generated**TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY-TEXARKANA**

**COMPLETE GUIDELINES AND PROCESS FOR**

**NEW ACADEMIC CERTIFICATES**

**GUIDELINES**

**Purpose of Certificate Programs**

Certificate programs enable Texas A&M University-Texarkana (A&M-Texarkana) the ability to provide students with focused instruction in specialized areas. They may be offered at the undergraduate, post-baccalaureate, graduate, and post-graduate level, and are typically comprised of courses that already exist in a program’s curriculum. The purpose of a certificate may be to augment a student’s skillset, meet the needs of community professionals, or provide a pathway to licensure. Given that certificate programs are accessible to both degree-seeking and non-degree seeking students, they may serve as a recruiting tool for degree programs.

**What Constitutes a Certificate Program?**

Certificate programs typically include between 9 – 36 semester credit hours (SCH) that can be a stand-alone credential. As such, certificate programs have a focused curriculum with specific learning outcomes and a specific target audience in mind. While not required, certificate programs are usually built on the resources (i.e., faculty, facilities) currently in place at A&M-Texarkana.

**What Levels of Approval are Required for New Certificate Programs?**

All new certificate programs require approval at the institutional level. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) also requires notification of all new certificates regardless of SCH number. Notification and/or approval of new certificates by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) depends upon the percentage of new content associated with the certificate. Certificates that are comprised of less than 25% new content do not require SACSCOC notification/approval. Notification is required for certificates that include 25% - 49% new content. Certificates that include 50% or more new content require SACSCOC approval.

**What Constitutes New Content?**

New content, as defined by SACSCO,C is content “…not currently offered by the institution at the new program’s [or certificate’s] instructional level.” As such, new content includes any new coursework at that degree level that does not currently exist at the university.

**How is Percent of New Content Calculated?**

Divide the total number of new SCH by the total number of SCH of the degree program within which the certificate is to be housed. For example, suppose psychology, a 120 SCH degree program, wants to create a 9 SCH undergraduate certificate in Research Literacy that consists of two existing courses in their curriculum (Statistical Methods in Psychology; Experimental Psychology) and one new course (Qualitative Methodology). The certificate’s percentage of new content is 9 SCH / 120 SCH = 7.5%.

**What does it Mean for a Certificate to be “Stackable” or “Embedded?”**

Both stackable and embedded certificates include a coherent group of courses required to fulfill the credential. The difference between the two lies in the way with which the student fulfills them. Stackable credentials, also referred to as stand-alone credentials, are those that provide a foundation toward the next credential. For example, a non-degree seeking student may choose to earn a Research Literacy credential and later use those hours to fulfill the requirements for a B.S. degree in Psychology. An embedded credential is one that is part of an existing program. For example, a student in the B.S. Psychology program may also earn a Research Literacy certificate as part of their coursework associated with the B.S. Psychology degree.

**I Want to Develop a Certificate Program. How Do I Begin?**

The first step in developing a new certificate program is to submit an iSite Ticket to Institutional Effectiveness and Research (IER). IER will then set up a meeting with the program faculty and Assistant Provost to go over the New Certificate Proposal Form and discuss the process. When all internal approvals are obtained, the faculty member will submit the proposal and approval artifacts to IER who will route for signatures.

**DIRECTIONS AND TIMELINE**

***This document describes the process for obtaining authorization to offer a new academic certificate.***

***There are 4 steps to the process that include:***

1. ***Obtaining TAMUT approval* (2 months)**
2. ***Completing the THECB New Academic Certificate Notification Form* (2 months)**
3. ***Receiving notification from the THECB (2 months)***
4. ***Notifying the TAMUT Campus* (2 months)**

***This process has a complete timeline of 8 months.***

**STEP 1: Obtain internal approval (2 months).** *This step encompasses the Texas A&M University-Texarkana (TAMUT) planning notification and approvals process.*

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| Task | Responsible Party | Item Details | Item Status |
| 1. **Create iSite Ticket** | Faculty | * Submits an iSite ticket at <https://isite.tamut.edu/portal>. In the portal, select: * Institutional Effectiveness and Research * New Certificate |  |
| 1. **Set meeting** | IER | * IER responds to the iSite ticket within 7 days and schedules a meeting with the faculty member to discuss the new degree proposal process. *Program accreditation considerations should be discussed at this meeting.* |  |
| 1. **Complete the Form** | Faculty | * Completes the TAMUT New Academic Certificate Form. |  |
| 1. **Obtain TAMUT approvals** | Faculty | * Collects meeting minutes that document approval at each level.   *Approval signatures on the form are NOT required during this step; they will be obtained via DocuSign in step 1f.* |  |
| 1. **Submit the Form to IER** | Faculty | * Emails the TAMUT New Academic Certificate Form and meeting minutes that document approvals to IER. |  |
| 1. **Route Documents** | IER | * Routes TAMUT New Academic Certificate Form and meeting minutes into DocuSign for signatures; other offices (i.e., Assistant Provost, Coordinator of Community College Pathways and Articulation, Registrar) are cc’d on the DocuSign as necessary. * Saves the completed form to the Certificate Historical files in the Institutional Effectiveness and Research Drive. |  |

**STEP 2: Complete the THECB Academic Certificate Notification Form\* (2 months).** *This step encompasses the process for completing the new academic certificate notification form.*

*\*Please refer to the TAMUT New Academic Certificate Form that was completed in Step 1, as it mirrors the THECB New Academic Certificate Notification Form.*

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| Task | Responsible Party | Item Details | Item Status |
| 1. **Complete the Forms** | Faculty | * Completes the [THECB Academic Certificate Notification Form](https://www.tamus.edu/academic/academic-planning-and-policy/changes-that-require-board-approval/degree-programs/new-bachelormaster-degree-2/) linked on The System website. *Please contact IER/Assistant Provost to ensure the forms referenced above are accurate and current.* |  |
| 1. **Submit the Forms to IER** | Faculty | * Submits the completed documents to IER and the Assistant Provost with all supporting artifacts to ensure timely processing. |  |

**STEP 3: Obtain THECB Notification (2 months).** *This step encompasses the THECB notification process. Please plan for a total of 2 months for approval of this step.*

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| Task | Responsible Party | Item Details | Item Status |
| 1. **Send the Form** | The System | * Forwards the THECB New Academic Certificate Notification Form to the THECB. |  |
| 1. **Receive Notice** | THECB | * Sends notification to TAMUT President and Provost. |  |
| 1. **Save Notice** | IER | * Saves the THECB Notification in the Certificate Historical files in the Institutional Effectiveness and Research Drive. |  |

**STEP 4: Notify the TAMUT Campus (2 months).** *This step encompasses the process for notifying all campus constituents.*

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Task | Responsible Party | Item Details | Item Status |
| 1. **Email Campus Constituents** | IER and Assistant Provost | * Email the following campus members regarding the new certificate: Registrar’s Office, Admissions Office, Financial Aid, Veteran Services, Enrollment Services, College Dean, Department Chair, Coordinator of Community College Pathways and Articulation, International Studies, Graduate Studies, Associate Provost, Provost, President’s Office, Marketing, and Communication * Attach The THECB Notification with Information Sheet and Course Sequence/Degree Plan from The THECB New Academic Certificate Notification Form. |  |
| 1. **Create Banner Code** | Registrar’s Office | * Uses the CIP Code, Certificate Name on The THECB Notification and Information Sheet to create the new certificate code in Banner and forwards the necessary Banner coding to the Admissions Office. |  |
| 1. **Add to Application** | Admissions Office | * Adds the Banner coding to the new certificate code to the two applications for admission portals as a certificate option. |  |
| 1. **Scribe in DegreeWorks** | Associate Registrar | * Uses the Course Sequence/Degree Plan to create the new degree program or new certificate program in DegreeWorks. |  |
| 1. **Create Catalog Entry** | Faculty | * Creates the appropriate section of the catalog when the Registrar’s Office opens it for updates for the next academic year. |  |
| 1. **Add to Webpages** | Faculty | * Meets with the University Advancement Office to add the new certificate to the appropriate website pages. |  |
| 1. **Update Certificates** | IER | * Meets with the University Advancement Office to update the certificate listing on the website. |  |
| 1. **Create Marketing** | University Advancement | * Meets with the Faculty, College Dean, and Associate Vice President of Enrollment and Student Engagement to create marketing materials and/or press releases regarding the new certificate. |  |

**EXAMPLE TIMELINE**

**You want to implement a new certificate program in Spring 2026. To plan for submission of the four steps, please consider the following timeline.**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Step | Timeframe | Notes |
| 1 | April – May 2025 |  |
| 2 | June – July 2025 |  |
| 3 | August – September 2025 | Please note that this step may be completed earlier than the estimated timeframe allowing for Step 4 to occur earlier than expected. |
| 4 | October – November 2025 | Please note that this step may be completed earlier than the estimated timeframe allowing you to admit and enroll students earlier than expected. |

**Admit and Enroll Students December 2025\***

**Classes begin January 2026**

*\*To allow more time for recruiting, admitting, and enrolling students for your program, you may need to delay your implementation semester to the following summer or fall semesters.*

**PLANNING TIMELINE**

**Use the template below to plan the new degree program proposal process.**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Step | Timeframe | Notes |
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**NEW ACACEMIC CERTIFICATE PROPOSAL FORM**

**INSTRUCTIONS**

Complete this form to propose a new academic certificate program.

**APPROVALS**

New certificates must be approved by the program (when applicable), division (when applicable), college/school, faculty senate, and Provost’s Office. When submitting your proposal for approval, include documentation of approval (i.e., meeting minutes, faculty senate recommendation form) at each previous level. For example, include documentation of program approval when submitting the proposal for division/departmental consideration; include program and division/department approval when submitting the proposal for college/school consideration. Once all approvals are obtained, submit this form and approval documentation to IER.

**CERTIFICATE DETAILS**

Provide the proposed name of the certificate along with its degree level, CIP code, and anticipated start date. Identify the college or school in which the certificate is housed, and if applicable the department/division and program. If the certificate is housed in an academic program, list the SCH associated with that program.

Proposed Certificate Title *(e.g. Psychology)* Type of Certificate *(Check One)*

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Undergraduate Graduate Doctoral

Post-baccalaureate Post-graduate

Proposed Certificate CIP Code

*(We cannot use CIP codes ending in 9999)* Proposed Implementation Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

*(*[*Texas CIP Codes*](http://www.txhighereddata.org/Interactive/CIP/)[*DHS STEM CIP Codes*](https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/stem-opt-hub/additional-resources/eligible-cip-codes-for-the-stem-opt-extension)*)* *Please consider your planning timeframe (see example on page 6), legislative*

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ *sessions, and program accreditation requirements.*

Academic College/School Academic Division/Department *(if applicable)*

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Academic Program *(if applicable)* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ If applicable, SCH of the Academic Program \_\_\_\_\_

**CONTACT PERSON**

Identify the contact person for the proposal including university email address and office phone number.

Name and Title \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ University Email Address \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

University Office Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**PURPOSE AND JUSTIFICATION**

Describe the proposed certificate, its purpose, and why it’s needed.

**MISSION AND BENEFIT**

Describe how the proposed certification aligns with the mission of the program/division/university.

**STUDENT POPULATION AND ADMISSION CRITERIA**

Describe the target student population the proposed certificate will serve, as well as identify the admission criteria.

**CERTIFICATE OUTCOMES AND ASSESSMENT**

Identify the student learning outcomes of the proposed certificate and how each will be assessed.

**CERTIFICATE CURRICULUM**

List the curriculum requirements of the proposed certificate. For each course, provide a prefix and number, course title, and description, and SCH.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Course Prefix and Number | Course Title | Course SCH | Course Modality | Course Part of Term | Description |
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**INSTRUCTIONS**

This template serves to document approval of new certificate programs. When creating the DocuSign envelope, attach this completed form, the New Certificate Proposal Form, and all approval artifacts (i.e., meeting minutes, faculty senate recommendation form).

**APPROVALS**

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Program Coordinator Date College Curriculum Committee Chair Date

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Department Chair/Division Head Date Faculty Senate Curriculum Committee Chair Date

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College Dean/School Director Date Faculty Senate President Date

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Provost & Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs Date

*CC: Institutional Effectiveness and Research, Assistant Provost, and Coordinator of Community College Pathways and Articulation*