



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER

Operating Policy and Procedure

HSC OP: 60.14, **Transcript Recognized Certificate Program**

PURPOSE: The purpose of this Health Sciences Center Operating Policy and Procedure (HSC OP) is to outline criteria for transcript-recognized certificate programs.

REVIEW: This HSC OP will be reviewed by July 1 of every odd-numbered year (ONY) by the Senior Vice Provost for Academic Affairs and Integrated Learning, Vice Provost for Institutional Effectiveness, Associate Provost for Accreditation and Assessment, the Academic Affairs and Curriculum Committee, and other appropriate internal stakeholders as needed. Recommendations forwarded to the Academics Council by August 1.

POLICY/PROCEDURE:

1. Institutional Definitions.

A transcript-recognized certificate is an academic credential awarded by the institution upon successful completion of a defined, focused sequence of credit-bearing courses that provide specialized knowledge and/or skills in a particular area of study. A transcript-recognized certificate program is narrower in scope and shorter in duration than a degree program, and is formally documented on a student's official transcript.

Transcript-recognized certificate program may fall into one of three categories:

- a. *Major-Dependent Certificate:* A certificate program designed to serve as a structured track or concentration within a specific degree program. Admission to the certificate is limited to students formally enrolled in the corresponding degree/major at TTUHSC. The certificate and degree are awarded concurrently upon completion of all requirements.
- b. *Degree-Dependent Certificate:* A certificate program that requires students to be admitted to and actively pursuing a degree program at TTUHSC. While the certificate requirements may be completed independently of the degree, it is only awarded if the student remains degree-seeking. Students who become inactive or graduate without completing the certificate are not eligible for re-admission to the certificate program unless they pursue an additional degree.
- c. *Stand-Alone Certificate:* A certificate program that is independent of any degree program. Admission to a stand-alone certificate is open to qualified students through the offering academic school. These certificates may be completed and awarded without enrollment in a degree program. Stand-alone certificates may be used as pathways to advanced study or professional development.

2. Program Structure and Requirements.

Transcript-recognized certificate programs must adhere to institutional standards to ensure academic quality, consistency, and alignment with institutional goals. All programs must be reviewed and approved through TTUHSC's established academic governance processes prior to implementation.

- a. *Approval*
 - (1) All new, revised, or terminated certificate programs must be submitted for review and approval in accordance with [HSC OP 60.11, Development, Revision, or Termination of Academic Programs](#)

b. Credit Hour Requirements

- (1) Undergraduate Certificate Programs
 - i. Undergraduate certificate programs must include a minimum of 15 semester credit hours (SCH) and may not exceed 24 SCH.
 - ii. Undergraduate certificates must be designed to be completed in no more than one academic year of full-time study.
 - iii. Certificates exceeding the 24 SCH maximum may be considered only under exceptional circumstances and must be justified through the academic approval process and subject to periodic review.
- (2) Graduate and Post-Baccalaureate Certificate Programs
 - i. Graduate and post-baccalaureate certificate programs must include a minimum of 12 SCH and may not exceed 18 SCH.
 - ii. All courses applied toward a graduate-level certificate must be graduate-level coursework.
 - iii. A minimum of two-thirds of the coursework must be completed at TTUHSC. Up to one-third may be transferred from other accredited institutions with prior approval.
 - iv. Graduate certificates must be designed to be completed within one academic year of full-time enrollment.
- (3) Legacy Programs
 - i. Existing certificate programs that exceed the maximum credit hour limits described above may continue as legacy programs with approval, but must undergo periodic program review to ensure they remain academically justified and consistent with institutional goals.

c. Completion Timeline and Academic Standards

- (1) Time-to-Completion Requirement
 - i. All students must complete the requirements for a transcript-recognized certificate program within five (5) academic years from the term of admission into the certificate program.
 - ii. For students enrolled in degree-dependent or major-dependent certificate programs, all certificate requirements must be completed within one academic year of the conferral of the associated degree.
 - iii. Certificates may not be awarded retroactively beyond this period unless approved by the Office of the Provost in consultation with the academic school.
 - iv. Completion timelines may be extended for certificate programs that are concurrent with or embedded within existing TTUHSC degree programs. Beyond this, extensions to the standard five-year completion window may be granted only in exceptional circumstances and require formal approval from both the academic school and the Provost or designee.
- (2) Duplication and Double Counting of Credits
 - i. No more than 50% of the total credit hours required for a certificate may be shared with an existing or concurrently pursued degree program unless the degree program is a continuation of the certificate program (then all coursework may be applied to the degree program).
 - ii. Courses used to satisfy one certificate may not be used to fulfill the requirements of another certificate unless specifically approved in the program's original design.
 - iii. Exceptions must be included in the original certificate proposal and are subject to review by the Academic Affairs and Curriculum Committee.

d. Transcript Recognition of Certificate Completion

- (1) Awarding of a certificate will be noted on the official TTUHSC transcript of students who complete a certificate program.

- (2) All transcript-recognized certificate programs must follow Office of the Registrar guidelines for transcript notation, course completion, and final award posting.

e. *Program Oversight and Review*

(1) Program Oversight

- i. Each certificate program must have an assigned Program Director or Academic Lead within the sponsoring school or department responsible for:
 - o Monitoring curriculum delivery and student progress
 - o Ensuring compliance with institutional and program-level policies
 - o Coordinating program assessment, reporting, and review activities
- ii. The Office of the Provost provides institutional oversight for transcript-recognized certificate programs.

(2) Admissions and Enrollment Oversight

- i. Each certificate program must clearly define eligibility criteria and admission procedures as part of its official proposal and catalog entry.
- ii. Admission processes for stand-alone certificates must be managed through the school admissions process.
- iii. Degree-dependent or major-dependent certificate programs may have school-specific admissions managed by the sponsoring academic unit.
- iv. Programs must disclose to applicants that students enrolled solely in certificate programs may not be eligible for federal financial aid, depending on the nature of the program and the student's enrollment status.