



Certificates, Diplomas and Micro-credentials

Subject:	Certificates, Diplomas and Micro-credentials
Sections:	General Definitions of Undergraduate Certificates and Diplomas , Procedures and Criteria for the Establishment of Undergraduate Certificate and Diploma Programs Offered by Continuing Studies at Western ; Approval and Administration of Undergraduate Certificate and Diploma Programs Offered Through the Continuing Studies at Western ; Convocation Guidelines for Certificate and Diploma Recipients ; Undergraduate Certificates and Diplomas – Process for Approvals by Senate and its Committees ; Admission Deadlines for Undergraduate Diploma and Certificate Programs ; Graduate Diplomas at Western ; General Definition of OSAP-Eligible Micro-credentials and Non-credit Programming
Approving Authority:	Senate
Responsible Committee:	Senate Committee on Academic Policy
Related Procedures:	*
Officer(s) Responsible for Procedure:	*
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GENERAL DEFINITIONS OF UNDERGRADUATE CERTIFICATES AND DIPLOMAS

An undergraduate Certificate should be awarded when the following criteria are met:

1. normally a pre-degree program;
2. normally requiring up to the equivalent of one calendar year or more to complete; and

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3. normally consisting of a minimum of 3.0 degree-credit courses, frequently in combination with a certificate-credit component.

An undergraduate Diploma should be awarded when the following criteria are met:

1. normally a post-degree program;
2. normally requiring the equivalent of one calendar year or more to complete; and
3. normally consisting of a minimum of 5.0 degree-credit courses.

PROCEDURES AND CRITERIA FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF UNDERGRADUATE CERTIFICATE AND DIPLOMA PROGRAMS OFFERED BY WESTERN CONTINUING STUDIES

General

1. A Certificate offered through Western Continuing Studies is a non-degree credential. It will be awarded to candidates who have successfully completed an approved program with a coordinated curriculum which usually will have a professional or an applied focus. A program normally will require completion of a set of degree-credit courses from the undergraduate offerings of the University combined with a set of specially designed certificate-credit courses, practica and/or workshops. The workload effort required in each certificate program normally will be equivalent to that of at least one academic year of full-time undergraduate study.
2. To be eligible to enter a certificate program, a candidate must be admitted to Western University and must have completed the prerequisites for any degree-credit courses in the program. Any additional requirements for entry into a specific certificate program will be defined in the proposal for the program. Students may be granted advanced standing in a certificate program for university courses already completed.
3. Generally, certificate programs will be designed so that they may be pursued concurrently with a Bachelor's degree.
4. To maintain registration in the program and to be eligible to obtain a certificate, a student must be in good standing in the University. Additional requirements to maintain registration in a program will be defined as part of each certificate program proposal. To be granted a certificate, a student must obtain pass standing in all courses in the program and, in the credit courses in the program, obtain a mark of at least 60% in each course and an overall average of 70%. Certificate-credit components must be completed in no more than five years following admission into the certificate program.

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5. Students will retain their academic standing for the degree-credit courses completed in a certificate program in accordance with the rules applicable to the partnering Faculty or Affiliated University College.

APPROVAL AND ADMINISTRATION OF UNDERGRADUATE CERTIFICATE AND DIPLOMA PROGRAMS OFFERED THROUGH WESTERN CONTINUING STUDIES

The Role of Program Advisory Committees

Western Continuing Studies will strike a Program Advisory Committee for each existing and proposed Certificate and Diploma program offered by Western Continuing Studies. Each Program Advisory Committee will be chaired by the Director of Continuing Studies at Western (or delegate). Membership shall include:

- faculty members with relevant academic expertise;
- representatives from appropriate professional organizations;
- the Coordinator of Certificate and Diploma Programs of Western Continuing Studies;
- staff members from Western Continuing Studies, or any other department of the University with expertise in the certificate or diploma area.

The Program Advisory Committee shall have responsibility for:

- designing the curriculum of the certificate program, including selection of courses to provide a coherent program reflecting academic and professional needs and objectives;
- determining the appropriateness of individual courses in level, scope and sequencing;
- determining the entry and progression requirements of the program;
- ensuring appropriate consultation with departments and faculties whose disciplines are contributing to the program.

Any new proposal for the establishment of a certificate program will be considered in light of the following criteria:

- that it is consistent with and promotes the mission of Western Continuing Studies;
- that it is not in conflict with the mission of any other academic unit of the University;
- that there is an adequate base of expertise and resources to support the proposed program;
- that there is a demonstrated need for the program.

The Role of Western Continuing Studies for approved programs:

Western Continuing Studies will present to the Senate Committee on Academic Curriculum and Awards (ACA) for recommendation to Senate for its approval each proposal for a certificate program which will include the structure of the program, an outline of the degree-credit component and descriptions of the certificate-credit components.

When a certificate program is approved, its general administration will rest with Western Continuing Studies, which will be responsible for overall coordination, coordination of the diploma-credit and certificate-credit components, student record-keeping, marketing, providing information to students, and other administrative issues.

Western Continuing Studies at Western, in conjunction with the Program Advisory Committee, will prepare an annual report for the information of the Dean of the relevant Faculty.

The Role of the Dean's Office for approved programs:

The Dean of the relevant Faculty in consultation with the Western Continuing Studies' Coordinator of Diplomas and Certificates shall name representatives of the faculty to an ad hoc committee to adjudicate candidates for admission to, progression in and graduation from certificate programs.

The Dean's Office shall also provide academic advising for certificate and diploma program students.

The Role of the Registrar's Office for approved programs:

The Registrar shall:

- receive calendar copy that generally describes certificate programs and lists by name the approved programs, for inclusion in the Academic Calendar.
- when a certificate is awarded, place an entry on the student's academic record giving the name of the certificate and date awarded.

Students admitted into a certificate program shall, in addition to their ordinary tuition fee, pay to Western Continuing Studies, such other prescribed fees established for each certificate program.

CONVOCATION GUIDELINES FOR CERTIFICATE AND DIPLOMA RECIPIENTS

Recipients of Certificates and Diplomas will be listed in the Convocation Program and will be permitted to participate in the graduation ceremonies.

All Diplomas and Certificates will be signed by the Registrar, Dean of the relevant Faculty/School or the Vice-Provost (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies), and the names of graduands from Diploma and Certificate programs will be listed under the heading for that Faculty/School in the Convocation Program.

Candidates who meet the requirements for graduation in Diploma and Certificate programs will be issued a Notification of Eligibility to Graduate (rather than an application to graduate, required of potential degree recipients).

UNDERGRADUATE CERTIFICATES AND DIPLOMAS - PROCESS FOR APPROVALS BY SENATE AND ITS COMMITTEES

- 1) Major changes, i.e., a Diploma or Certificate name change; an exception to the usual definitions of a diploma or a certificate; or the introduction or withdrawal of a diploma or certificate program, must be recommended to ACA for recommendation to Senate for approval using the process approved by Senate.
- 2) Structural changes or changes of calendar copy within a diploma or certificate program or courses within the program must be submitted to the Subcommittee on Undergraduate Academic Courses (SOC). The proposal should include a reference to the existing calendar copy on the Continuing Studies website.

[Secretarial Note: In each case, Western Continuing Studies is partnered with a Faculty on campus, if there is a degree-credit course component.]

ADMISSION DEADLINES FOR UNDERGRADUATE DIPLOMA AND CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS

For admission deadlines of diploma and certificate programs offered by Western Continuing Studies, please consult the Western Continuing Studies website.

GRADUATE DIPLOMAS (GDip)

A Graduate Diploma is a complete set and sequence of courses, combinations of courses and/or other units of study prescribed by a university for the fulfillment of the requirements for each particular for-credit graduate diploma.

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A Type 2 Graduate Diploma program is intended to demonstrate mastery of a topic area that is usually complementary to, but not embedded within, a graduate student's home program. The Type 2 diploma is to be completed concurrent with a student's home degree program. The goal of the Type 2 Graduate Diploma is to encourage breadth at the graduate level, often through interdisciplinary studies. A student who completes a program and a Graduate Diploma should have achieved different learning outcomes than a student who has completed only the normal degree requirements.

Type 2 Graduate Diplomas are achieved by successfully completing the academic requirements of the student's home degree program and additional academic requirements associated with the Graduate Diploma. These additional Graduate Diploma requirements are minimally equivalent to 1.0 Full Credit Equivalents (FCEs) achieved through courses or milestones. These requirements must be additional to the requirements of the home program.

The home graduate program participating in the Graduate Diploma may allow specified Graduate Diploma courses to also be counted as electives in the student's home program. However, a minimum of 1.0 FCE requirements must be unique to the Graduate Diploma and can not also be counted towards the home program's requirements.

A Type 3 Graduate Diploma program has requirements minimally equivalent to 1.5 FCEs achieved through courses or milestones. An interdisciplinary Graduate Diploma program may be proposed by one or more academic units.

GENERAL DEFINITION OF OSAP-ELIGIBLE MICRO-CREDENTIALS AND NON-CREDIT PROGRAMMING

A micro-credential is a certification of assessed competencies, skills and knowledge that is additional, stand alone, complementary to, or a component of a formal qualification. Indicators of a micro-credential are a statement of purpose, learning outcomes, and strong evidence of need by industry, employers, and/or the community.

A micro-credential is typically offered through Western Continuing Studies and results in an official Grade Report being available for the student where the evidence of achievement of outcomes will be embedded and visible to employers.

Advanced Qualification (AQ) courses offered by the Faculty of Education are non-credit courses that are included in the category of micro-credentials as recognized by the Ministry for OSAP-eligible funding. AQ courses appear on a student's transcript. Students register directly in AQ courses and do not need to be admitted to the university. Normally, AQ courses represent a time commitment from students of

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125 hours per course and are accredited by the Ontario College of Teachers (OCT). OSAP-eligible non-credit programming includes programs that have been brought forward for review and approval at Western and are submitted to the relevant Ministry for approval for OSAP eligibility.

Guiding Principles

- Micro-credentials can be a complement to traditional credentials (certificate, diploma, degree, or post-graduate certificate) or stand alone, and will be designed to facilitate a continuous pathway for lifelong learning, where possible.
- Micro-credentials are instruments that can deepen equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI), decolonization and Indigenization efforts at Western University, as [per Western's Indigenous Strategic Plan \(2016\)](#).
- Micro-credentials are subject to a robust and rigorous quality assurance process.
- Micro-credentials should represent competencies identified by employers/industry sectors to meet employer needs while also highlighting competencies needed within the overall workforce.
- Micro-credentials must have a total workload (or study time) of normally 12-24 hours, including completion of a summative assessment that demonstrates evidence of achievement of learning outcomes.
- Micro-credentials may provide clear and seamless pathways across different credentials (both non-credit and credit) and may be stackable. A program leading to an academic qualification may include micro-credentials as components of learning, provided the overall design of the micro-credential(s) is coherent and meets the qualification outcomes and strategic purpose of the program.
- Micro-credentials are based on assessed proficiency of a competency, not on time spent learning.
- Micro-credentials are secure, trackable, and portable, and competency is documented through the unit providing the learning such as Western Continuing Studies.

Approvals

ACA approves proposals for OSAP-eligible non-credit micro-credentials and Advanced Qualification courses on behalf of Senate.

All non-credit programming that is not OSAP-eligible is administered and approved by the unit offering the programming.

Last Reviewed: January 16, 2026