

Academic Positioning
Alternative Credentials Implementation Charge
Objective #1: Definitions

Committee Members

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Charge

Establish and document within the UNI Course Catalog “rules of the road” for minors, certificates, and other forms of credit-bearing recognition (e.g. “sub-certificates”, badges, transcript notations, etc.) that will allow for consistent development, reporting, and record-keeping.

- a. Define credit hour length, types, and definitions of programs shorter than a major.
 - i. Note: Defining minors along with certificates and “sub-certificates” will help define the unique purpose of each program. UCC created recommendations for minors and certificates. That report should inform the task force on this work.
- b. Define the approval process for credit-bearing “sub-certificate” programs. This includes when UCC/GCCC approval is needed.

General Information

The proposed definitions below apply to all levels of coursework at the University of Northern Iowa including graduate programs. Each of the options below may be taken through the traditional, degree-seeking route or may be a standalone credential depending on the student’s professional goals.

Proposed Definitions for the Catalog

Program: Any organized combination of coursework designed for the achievement of specific learning outcomes that has a designated Classification of Instructional Program (CIP) code.

Major (33 - 80 credits): Comprehensive program defined around larger disciplinary or multidisciplinary themes. Majors must range between 33 - 80 credits with an exception for the BAS degree (30 credit minimum). Major requirements may only exceed the maximum if the extension is due to overlapped courses between the major and the General Education requirements AND if required due to program accreditation/certification requirements.

Minor (18 - 24 credits): Organized coursework in a subject to create a secondary academic focus, without the time commitment of an additional major. Minors may only exceed 24 credits if necessary to meet licensure or accreditation requirements.

Certificates (2-18 credits): Organized coursework focused on thematic connections that is available as a stand-alone credential beyond taking a single course. A certificate may surpass the 18-credit limit (up to 24 credits for undergraduates; 27 credits for graduates) only if it contains a specialized combination of courses tightly focused on a specific set of skills or knowledge that are aligned with industry standards in which the length is necessary to meet licensure or accreditation requirements.

The following information is for the curriculum handbook: Standard certificates should range between 2-18 credits with a minimum of 2 courses. However, a certificate may surpass the 18-credit limit (up to 24 credits for undergraduates; 27 credits for graduates) only if it contains a specialized combination of courses tightly focused on a specific set of skills or knowledge with an emphasis on professional-based requirements.

- To be a certificate at any level, the requirements must have a minimum of 2 courses.
- Graduate certificates must only contain graduate-level courses.
- Multiple certificates may contribute to a major or degree although this structure must demonstrate intentional integrated design through the combination that ties the certificates together as a program, OR require an additional course, project, paper, or other culminating experiences that draws the certificates together as a cohesive program. Students are responsible for declaring their intent to combine certificates by formally declaring the program in addition to completing the certificates.
- Certificates that link to a particular major cannot be required in a way that circumvents the maximum credit hour limits of a major.
- Certificates that bundle towards another credential must follow the credit hour limits for each program type.

Workshops (1-6 credits): Courses offered for special groups as announced in advance. Lecture workshops require 16 classroom contact hours for every one hour of credit. Activity workshops require 30 classroom contact hours for every hour of credit. Students may take work in one or more workshops.

- Undergraduates may not use more than 6 hours toward graduation.
- Graduate workshops may be used toward the completion of a graduate program with departmental approval, not to exceed 15 credit hours.
- Graduate credit will only be given for graded UNI workshop courses that provide professional opportunities to current working professionals.

Post-Masters Advanced Studies Certificate (ASC): A combination of post-masters degree and graduate courses that lead to a specific professional license or endorsement beyond the requirements of a master's degree.

Additional Information

A portion of the charge included the approval process for credit-bearing "sub-certificate" programs. The committee determined that the range of certificate requirements allowed for flexibility in program offerings such that anything less than a certificate would be reflected as a course or workshop. The key distinction between a certificate and a course is that a certificate requires a minimum of at least two courses. Courses and certificates will continue to require UCC/GCCC approval.

Opportunities

In the interest of haste, the committee strictly focused on the charge of defining credit-bearing majors, minors, certificates, and workshops within the context of Alternative Credentials. Additionally, the proposed guidelines considered how program levels could be stacked towards additional credentials or degrees.

Further discussion could and should continue regarding badging, Comprehensive Learner Records (CLR's), documentation of Student Learning Outcomes, or true micro-credentials (i.e. badges, skill recognition, a certain combination of workshops leading towards a course, etc.).

Program	Degree Req.	Program Min.	Program Max.	Aid Eligible	Artifact
B.A.S.	120	30	30	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Diploma ● Transcript
Non-Teaching BA, BLS, BSW	120	33	62	Yes	
B.S.	120	33	68	Yes	
B.M.	120	33	80	Yes	
B.F.A	122	33	80	Yes	
Teaching B.A.	120	33	80	Yes	
Major	n/a	33	80	Only if part of a degree program	Transcript
Minor	n/a	18	24		
Certificate	n/a	2	18		
Post-Bacc Options					
2nd Bachelor's	32	Depends on program sought		Yes	Diploma Transcript
Post-Bacc Major, Minor, or Certificate (<i>Non-Degree</i>)	n/a	Depends on program sought		No	Transcript
Master's Degree	30	30	66	Yes	Diploma Transcript
Graduate Certificate	n/a	2	17	Only if part of a degree program	Transcript
Post-Masters Options					
Advanced Studies Certificate	n/a	33	35	Yes	Printed Certificate Transcript
Specialist in Education (Ed.S.)	68	36	39	Yes	Diploma Transcript
Ed.D.	48	48	48	Yes	Diploma Transcript