

CERTIFICATE INFORMATION

General Information

A student wishing to earn an undergraduate or graduate certificate at San Francisco State University is expected to follow University requirements and procedures outlined herein and complete the prescribed program requirements of the desired certificate.

Purpose of Certificate Programs

A certificate program is a coherent set of academic courses that does not lead to a degree but focuses on a substantial area of study that may be practically oriented toward skills and/or occupations. Such a program is designed to meet special needs, especially those with limited time to learn specific subjects, concepts, skills, and competencies. The award of a certificate means the holder has completed the required courses and related work at an acceptable level of academic accomplishment. The certificate indicates to a prospective employer that the University validates the particular program of study.

Acceptance to Certificate Programs

Guidelines for Acceptance to Undergraduate Certificate Programs

To be accepted to an undergraduate certificate program, a student must have completed 56-semester units of undergraduate coursework with a 2.0 (C) grade point average or better. Exceptions may be permitted upon presentation of special justification to the Dean of Undergraduate Studies or appropriate program administrator for Extended Learning programs.

Students interested in pursuing an undergraduate certificate program should contact the offering department regarding specific program requirements and procedures. For certificate programs offered through Extended Learning, students should contact the program area, as shown in the program description.

Guidelines for Acceptance to Graduate Certificate Programs

Admission to Post-Baccalaureate Status

- Admission to a certificate program requires a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution, with a major in the appropriate field(s) of study, as well as a grade point average of 3.0 or better in the last 60 semester units (90 quarter units) completed. If the major is not in a related field of study, the department offering the certificate may require the student to take additional courses prior to admission.
- A student who is already enrolled in the University as a post-baccalaureate student (i.e., pursuing a graduate degree, a credential program, or in unclassified status) may apply to a certificate program.
- A student who is interested in pursuing a certificate program may apply to the University as a post-baccalaureate classified student. **Note:** It is recommended that the student seek admission, if appropriate, to a degree program within the sponsoring department so that graduate units taken may be considered, where permitted, for later application towards a degree. No more than 12 units taken as an unclassified student may be applied toward the requirements for a graduate degree.

Acceptance to Certificate Program

A student enrolled or eligible to enroll in the University as a post-baccalaureate level student must contact the program offering the desired certificate to complete any prescribed requirements for

acceptance to that program. Such requirements and procedures may include a supplementary application, a defined set of prerequisite courses, a designated GPA, written recommendations, etc., as may be appropriate for the program in question.

Basic University Certificate Program Requirements

The University requirements listed below are considered a minimum and the academic department offering the program may impose additional or higher requirements for specific certificate program(s). See the specific presentation in the Academic Programs section of this *Bulletin* or contact the department offering the certificate for further information.

Basic University Undergraduate Certificate Program Requirements

- Every student in an undergraduate certificate program must complete a minimum common core of coursework (i.e., required of all students) consisting of at least 12-semester units. See specific program requirements.
- At least two-thirds of the units comprising an undergraduate certificate program must be at the upper-division level. Graduate-level courses may be used in special circumstances to satisfy program requirements at the discretion of the academic area offering the certificate.
- At least one-half of the required minimum number of units must be taken in residence. Credit by examination is permitted in accordance with established University regulations.
- At least two-thirds of the units applied toward meeting the requirements of an undergraduate certificate program must be graded on an A-F basis.
- The coursework used to satisfy the requirements of an undergraduate certificate must be completed with a cumulative GPA of 2.0 (C) or better, and only courses with a grade of CR, C-, or better, may be included to meet undergraduate certificate program requirements.
- Before completing an undergraduate certificate program, all students must demonstrate an appropriate level of writing competency as prescribed by the program area offering the certificate (see program requirements).
- Courses may be used to meet both a baccalaureate degree and an undergraduate certificate objective providing they are appropriate and acceptable toward the specific requirements of each program.
- There is normally no statutory period for units required for an undergraduate certificate at SF State. However, if any course required for the certificate was taken more than seven years prior to graduation, then departments and programs may require students to retake that course or demonstrate currency in that subject. Consult with the department for more information.

Basic University Graduate Certificate Program Requirements

- Every student in a graduate certificate program must complete a minimum common core of coursework (i.e., required of all students) consisting of at least 9-semester units. See specific program requirements.
- At least one-half, but no less than six, of the units comprising a graduate certificate program must be in graduate-level courses. Any undergraduate course utilized in the program must be at the upper-division level.

- At least two-thirds of the course units for the certificate must be taken in residence. Units earned through extension, including Open University enrollment, are not considered as work in residence.
- Curriculum requirements must be met explicitly without the use of waivers and substitutions.
- At least two-thirds of the required units for a certificate program must be graded on an A-F basis.
- At least two-thirds of the course units used to meet the requirements for the certificate must have been taken while in post-baccalaureate status. Coursework taken prior to acceptance in the certificate program may not be used to meet program requirements, except in unusual circumstances. Approval must be granted before starting the certificate program.
- The coursework used to satisfy the requirements for a graduate certificate must be completed with a cumulative GPA of 3.0 (B) or better, and only courses completed with a grade of C or better may be used to meet program requirements.
- Before completing a graduate certificate program, all students must demonstrate an appropriate level of writing competency as prescribed by the program area offering the certificate (see program requirements).
- Courses may be used to meet both a master's degree and a graduate certificate objectives provided they are appropriate and acceptable toward the specific requirements of each program.
- All requirements for a graduate certificate program must be completed within a seven-year period defined as beginning with the date of registration for the first course used to meet the requirements for the certificate and ending with the date the last requirement is completed. It is expected that the student will have filed an application for the award of the certificate within this same period. Students, who for documented, serious, and compelling reasons, cannot complete their certificate program within the seven-year limit, may request one extension. If granted, extensions cannot exceed one year. Students requesting an extension must be in good academic standing and have revalidated all expired coursework exceeding seven years.
- The student prepares a Certificate Approved Program (CAP) form (available in the department, Undergraduate Studies, or Graduate Studies websites (<https://grad.sfsu.edu/content/grad-forms/>)), and forwards it, along with transcript(s) showing the completion of all course requirements, to the department chair of the area offering the certificate program.
- The chair will determine if all the requirements for the certificate have been satisfactorily completed and sign the CAP form.
- The student, for both undergraduate and graduate certificates, pays the application fee (\$7.00) for the award of the certificate at the Bursars' Office and has the CAP form stamped to confirm payment.
- The student then submits the following to the Division of Graduate Studies:
 - the CAP form signed by the department/program chair and, if appropriate, the faculty advisor,
 - supporting transcript(s), and
 - evidence of the fee paid.

The Division of Graduate Studies is responsible for evaluating the materials received and authorizing the issuance of both undergraduate or graduate certificates on behalf of the University and the appropriate department or program area. The Dean of Undergraduate Studies or the Dean of Graduate Studies, as appropriate, will sign the earned certificate and return it, along with two signed copies of the CAP form, to the department/program area. Upon receipt, the department/program chair signs the official certificate and arranges to issue it, along with a copy of the CAP form, to the student. A second copy of the signed CAP form is to be retained by the department/program area for its records.

Observance of Certificate Requirements

A student planning to earn an undergraduate or graduate certificate must meet the requirements in the University *Bulletin* that are in effect either on the date the student is officially accepted to a certificate program or on the date the application for the award of the certificate is filed in the Division of Graduate Studies (for both undergraduate and graduate certificates).

Advising and Registration

Advising assistance will be provided by the program faculty responsible for offering the program.

Registration for required courses will be accomplished by means of the normal registration process of the University or through Extended Learning registration procedures for Extended Learning certificate programs.

Applying for Award of the Certificate

When all the requirements for either an undergraduate or graduate certificate program have been completed, students must take the steps below for the award of the certificate.