



OFFICE OF THE FACULTY COUNCIL  
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

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May 2, 2017

Provost Maurie McNinnis  
The University of  
Texas at Austin  
MAI 4005  
Campus Mail Code: G3400

Dear Provost McNinnis:

Enclosed for your consideration and recommendation to President Fennes is a proposal to change the policy for recognizing undergraduate academic certificate programs on official University transcripts (D 15068-15072). The proposal recommends that Texas Extended Campus students who have completed all course work toward a certificate program be allowed to apply for transcript recognition of that certificate. At its meeting yesterday, the Faculty Council unanimously approved the proposal by voice vote. Final approval of this legislation resides with President Fennes.

Please let me know if you have questions or if I can provide other information concerning this legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Alan W. Friedman".

Alan W. Friedman, Secretary  
General Faculty and Faculty Council  
The University of Texas at Austin  
Arthur J. Thaman and Wilhelmina Doré Thaman Professor of English and  
Comparative Literature

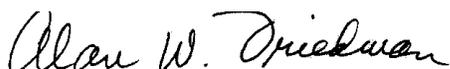
AWF: dlr  
Enclosure

cc: Carlos Martinez, Chief of Staff, Office of the President  
Susan Lamborghini, Assistant to the Chief of Staff, Office of the President  
Michelle George, Administrative Manager for Faculty Affairs, Provost's Office  
Gloria Mendoza, Administrative Manager, Office of the President  
Seema Agarwal, Educational Policy Committee Chair

## DOCUMENTS OF THE GENERAL FACULTY

**PROPOSAL TO CHANGE THE POLICY FOR RECOGNIZING UNDERGRADUATE ACADEMIC  
CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS ON OFFICIAL UNIVERSITY TRANSCRIPTS AS APPROVED BY  
THE EDUCATIONAL POLICY COMMITTEE**

On behalf of the Educational Policy Committee, Professor Seema Agarwala (Committee Chair and Associate Professor, Molecular Biosciences) submitted the following revisions to the policy for recognizing undergraduate academic certificate programs on official University transcripts. On April 7, 2017, the Educational Policy Committee (EPC) recommended approval of the proposal. Dr. Stephen M. Walls (Deputy Director for Business Development for the Texas Extended Campus and Senior Lecturer, Marketing Administration) will present the proposal for discussion at the April 10<sup>th</sup> Faculty Council meeting. The secretary has classified it as legislation of general interest. Final approval resides with the President.



Alan W. Friedman, Secretary

General Faculty and Faculty Council

The University of Texas at Austin

Arthur J. Thaman and Wilhelmina Doré Thaman Professor of English and Comparative Literature

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**Background**

Extended Campus students are students who are not enrolled in a UT Austin degree program and enroll in courses through the TEXAS Extended Campus (TEC) or another extension unit.

Currently, Extended Campus students can complete UT Austin academic coursework available through the TEXAS Extended Campus (TEC) or another extension unit and receive transcriptable credit for each course. These academic credit courses are created from courses in the University's course inventory, and are approved through regular curricular approval processes in place at UT and within the colleges and schools. Undergraduate academic credit coursework taken through an extension unit appears on the student's official transcript under a special heading for the TEXAS Extended Campus.

While Extended Campus students receive transcriptable credit for each UT Austin course they complete, they do not receive transcript recognition for completing an undergraduate certificate, even if they complete all of the required coursework for an approved UT Austin certificate program, and even though the certificate program and all of the classes are developed through UT Austin departments/faculty who approve the curriculum, standards and instructors. This is because the current policy on undergraduate transcript-recognized certificates is focused exclusively on degree-seeking students and only allows students to receive transcriptable credit for certificate programs after they receive their degree. Given that Extended Campus students do not receive a degree, they do not receive transcript recognition of the completion of the certificate.

TEC is seeking a revision to UT Austin's undergraduate academic certificate policy to address this concern. The proposed revisions would allow Extended Campus students the opportunity to receive transcript-recognition for completing the requirements of a UT Austin undergraduate certificate program.

Awarding Extended Campus students transcript recognition for completing an undergraduate certificate program would allow the University to:

- a. Provide the same credential for all students (degree-seeking and Extended Campus) who complete the same certificate program;
- b. Increase access to high-quality postsecondary credentials in the state of Texas, including access for traditionally under-represented students;
- c. Create additional revenue sources at UT Austin that can be used to improve teaching, learning and research initiatives.

TEC is not proposing any changes to the way certificate programs or courses are approved, nor is it proposing changes to the required length of certificate programs. Furthermore, it is not proposing any changes to the way certificate programs are recognized for degree-seeking students.

Following are the proposed revisions to the current policy language. The complete (and current) policy document can be viewed online at <https://facultycouncil.utexas.edu/transcript-recognized-certificates>.

Undergraduate academic certificates earned at The University of Texas at Austin will be indicated on the official University transcript only if the certificate program meets all of the conditions specified in A, B, and C below.

#### A. Minimum Criteria for Certificate Recognition on the Transcript

1. Transcript-recognized undergraduate academic certificate program must be completed in conjunction with or within one year of completion of an undergraduate degree at the University of Texas at Austin; students pursuing an integrated undergraduate/graduate program must complete the requirements for the certificate within one year after completing the undergraduate requirements of their program. A maximum of nine credit hours in the certificate program may be taken after completion of the undergraduate degree. This requirement does not apply to Extended Campus students who are not seeking a degree at UT Austin.
2. Transcript-recognized undergraduate academic certificate programs must require a minimum of 18 hours of certificate course work but not more than 24 hours.
3. At least half of the required course work in the certificate program must be completed in residence at The University of Texas at Austin. For Extended Campus students, all of the required course work in the certificate program must be UT Austin credit, unless otherwise specified in the catalog entry for a specific program.<sup>1</sup>
4. A student may not earn a certificate in the same field of study as his or her major, and at least one course required in the certificate program must be outside the requirements of the major. However, courses in the certificate program outside the major may fulfill other degree requirements such as general education requirements or required elective hours. This requirement does not apply to Extended Campus students who are not seeking a degree at UT Austin.
5. Students apply for transcript recognized undergraduate academic certificates at the time they complete their undergraduate degree or the certificate program, whichever comes later. Transcript recognition is awarded at that time. Extended Campus students apply for transcript recognition at the time of certificate completion and transcript recognition is awarded at that time.

#### B. Approval Process for Transcript-Recognized Undergraduate Academic Certificate Programs

The requirements of transcript-recognized undergraduate academic certificate programs shall be listed in the undergraduate catalog, with proposals reviewed and approved by the Committee on Undergraduate Degree Program Review (CUDPR) and subsequently sent to the Faculty Council as minor legislation for approval. Proposals for these certificate programs are required to obtain prior approval from the sponsoring College(s) or School(s).

Program proposals must include a statement of objective and need (expected demand), academic course and other requirements, and the composition of the certificate program faculty committee,

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<sup>1</sup> On April 14, 2017, Item three was modified based on feedback from Faculty Council members.

including the committee chair. The committee must have a minimum of five members, and at least 2/3 of the committee must be tenured or tenure-track faculty.

Once approved, programs are required to submit a report to CUDPR and the Dean of Undergraduate Studies every two years. The report must list the current chair and all committee members and include the number of students completing the certificate program in the prior two years. If the committee plans any changes in the requirements of the certificate program, these changes should be explained; changes require the same approvals as an original application, that is, approval by the College(s) or School(s), CUDPR, and the Faculty Council.

### C. The Certification Process for Students Completing the Requirements

Certification of completion of the requirements is done by the program's faculty committee chair (or designee). An application for the certification of completion is initiated by the student and submitted to the chair of the faculty oversight committee at the time they complete their undergraduate degree or the certificate program, whichever comes later. Transcript recognition is awarded at that time.

Application for certification must be made directly to the certificate program and is not a substitute for the application for graduation required by a student's degree-granting school or college. After approval of the student's application, the Registrar's Office will be notified so that the certificate can be shown on the official transcript.

For Extended Campus students, an application for the certificate of completion is initiated by the student and submitted to the appropriate extension unit at the time they complete the certificate program. After approval of the student's application by the extension unit and the program's faculty committee chair (or designee), the Registrar's Office will be notified so that the certificate can be shown on the official transcript.

Following are proposed revisions to the current catalog copy language for transcript-recognized certificate programs, to align with the policy revisions detailed above.

### **Transcript-Recognized Certificate Programs**

Transcript-recognized certificate programs offer interdisciplinary curricula that support and extend a student's major or curricula in a specific academic or technical field that support a student's educational goals. Undergraduates who complete certificate requirements in conjunction with their degree requirements or within one year after earning the degree receive recognition on the University transcript; students in integrated undergraduate/graduate programs must complete certificate requirements within one year after they complete their undergraduate degree requirements. A maximum of nine hours of certificate coursework may be taken after the student has earned the undergraduate degree. At least half of the required certificate coursework must be completed in residence-at the University.

A student may not earn a certificate in the same field as his or her major, and at least one certificate course must be outside the requirements of the major. However, certificate courses outside the major may be counted toward other degree requirements.

Students should apply for the certificate when they apply for graduation or when they complete the certificate program, whichever is later. Transcript recognition is awarded at the end of that semester or summer session.

The above requirements do not apply to Extended Campus students who are not seeking a degree from UT Austin. For Extended Campus students, all of the required course work in a certificate program must be UT

Austin credit, unless otherwise specified in the catalog entry for a specific program. Extended Campus students apply for transcript recognition at the time of certificate completion and transcript recognition is awarded at that time.

[No further changes.]