

## UC DAVIS GRADUATE COUNCIL POLICY

GC2007-01 - (rev. 04)

### Graduate Academic Certificate Program (GAC) and Graduate Academic Unit Certificate (GAUC) Policy and Proposal Guidelines

Revised – January 25, 2007; January 2008; March 15, 2010; June 12, 2020

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This document includes the following information:

- Definitions of the two formats of graduate certificate programs:
  1. Graduate Academic Certificate (GAC)
  2. Graduate Academic Unit Certificate (GAUC).
- Requirements for each graduate certificate program
- Guidelines for proposing the creation of a new graduate certificate program

#### I. Definition

A graduate certificate program is a structured sequence of courses and requirements that focuses on a specialty or area of expertise not offered by a regular degree program and has been reviewed and approved by the Graduate Council. There are two formats for graduate certificate programs that make use of regular UC Davis courses: 1) the University of California Graduate Academic Certificate (GAC) program is open to any student who is acceptable for admission into the Graduate Division (SR 735), and 2) the UC Davis Graduate Academic Unit Certificate (GAUC) is open to, and taken by, currently enrolled UC Davis graduate students, professional students, and postdoctoral scholars.

#### **University of California Graduate Academic Certificate (GAC)**

The GAC certificate program is open to any student who is acceptable for admission into the Graduate Division (SR 735). Therefore, students can be admitted directly into the GAC and do not have to be concurrently enrolled in a UC Davis graduate or professional degree program. However, direct admits must meet the same admissions criteria that would make them eligible for admission to a graduate program at UC Davis. Currently enrolled UC Davis graduate and professional students who enroll in a GAC program cannot use GAC coursework to fulfill the requirements for their degree or another certificate. A GAC cannot be granted until a student has completed a minimum of three quarters in full-time resident study at the University of California with a grade-point average of at least 3.0. The certificate of completion for a GAC will be issued by the Office of the Registrar with the seal of the University of California, and will bear the signatures of the dean of the school or college, the Dean of the Graduate Division, the Chancellor, and the President.

#### **UC Davis Graduate Academic Unit Certificate (GAUC)**

A GAUC is administered by a UC Davis academic instructional unit (college, professional school, department, graduate group or a designated emphasis program). A GAUC consists of a minimum of 12 units of graduate level instruction and may use shared courses/units for another degree program. A GAUC cannot be granted until a student has completed a minimum of three quarters of resident study at the University of California as prescribed by the Policy on Residence and Transfer Credit ([GC2011-03](#)) and SR [610](#), [612](#), and [688](#). A grade-point average of at least 3.0 is required in order to be awarded a certificate of completion for a GAUC which will bear the seal(s) or letterhead of the particular College(s) or School(s), but not the seal of the University of California, Davis. The certificate will be signed by the dean(s) of the school or college or program chair(s); it will not bear the signatures of the Dean of the Graduate Division, the Chancellor, or the President. GAUC certificates are open to and are taken by currently enrolled UC Davis graduate students, professional students, and postdoctoral scholars.

## II. Requirements for a Graduate Certificate Program (GAC or GAUC)

The GAC/GAUC will have: a faculty Chair, executive committee, advisors, a staff coordinator, curriculum, admissions policy, and completion requirements. If the certificate is offered through an approved graduate degree program, the faculty, chair and committees shall be the same for the certificate program and the degree program; administration of the GAC/GAUC may be delegated to a subcommittee appointed for that purpose by the graduate degree program's Executive Committee or Graduate Program Committee.

### 1. Faculty

The curriculum of the GAC/GAUC shall be offered by faculty organized in a manner to provide graduate level instruction (professional school, department, graduate group, or a designated emphasis program). These faculty members must hold appropriate instructional titles at the University of California, must have research and teaching expertise in the area of the certificate program, and must be eligible for graduate program membership as defined by Graduate Council policy (GC1998-02).

### 2. Chair

The Chair of the GAC/GAUC is the Chair of the instructional unit offering the program.

### 3. Executive Committee

The GAC/GAUC shall have an executive committee, chaired by the GAC/GAUC Chair and consisting of at least two additional faculty members elected by the membership.

If the GAC/GAUC is offered through a graduate degree program, the executive committee shall be the same for the GAC/GAUC and the degree program; administration of the GAC may be delegated to a subcommittee appointed for that purpose by the graduate degree program's Executive Committee or Graduate Program Committee.

The Executive Committee shall be responsible for proposing the curriculum, including requirements for admission, monitoring students' progress and for a GAC, recommending the awarding of the certificate to the Dean of Graduate Studies after the student has completed all requirements.

### 4. Admissions Committee

A GAC/GAUCs shall have an admissions committee. If the GAC/GAUC is offered through a graduate degree program, the admissions committee may be the same for the GAC/GAUC and the degree program or be delegated to a subcommittee appointed for that purpose by the graduate degree program's Executive Committee or Graduate Program Committee.

### 5. Curriculum

GAC: The curriculum shall consist of a minimum of 12 graduate-level instructional units. However, students must meet the full-time residence requirement (SR 735). For students who are directly admitted into the GAC, the student must be enrolled in at least 12 units of upper division and/or graduate courses for three quarters.

GAUC: The curriculum shall consist of a minimum of 12 graduate-level instructional units. Accordingly, a certificate should not add more than one quarter to the student's time-to-degree.

### 6. Degree Conferral Process

GAC: Successful completion of all requirements for an approved GAC program is recognized by (1) notation on a student's transcript and (2) the awarding of a certificate with established language ([SR 735](#)) and the gold seal of the University of California.

GAUC: Successful completion of all requirements for an approved GAUC is recognized by (1) notation on a student's transcript and (2) awarding of the certificate with the

established language below:

“College (School, or other academic unit) of X, University of California, Davis,  
Graduate Certificate in Z”

A sample of the proposed hard copy certificate to be awarded will be required as part of the certificate proposal. The academic unit or units involved are responsible for producing and issuing the certificate.

## **7. Program Evaluation**

Evaluation of the academic quality of the graduate academic certificate program will be by Graduate Council's Program Review Committee. A new GAC/GAUC will be reviewed 5 years after admitting its first students. Justification for continuation of the program is an important part of this first review, due to the 7-year “sunset clause” that applies to GAC/GAUC (see below). Thereafter, the GAC/GAUC will be reviewed on a 7-year review cycle. The GAC/GAUC will be reviewed in conjunction with the instructional unit offering the program. The review will be initiated by Graduate Council, and programs will be notified one year in advance of the review.

## **8. Sunset Clause**

Approval of a new GAC/GAUC includes a 7-year “sunset clause.” That is, admissions to the certificate program will end automatically after 7 years unless continuation is requested and justified in the program's self-review document as part of the program review process. The rationale for the sunset clause is that GAC's should reflect current needs and changing trends in education, and thus they may be short-lived.

# **III. Proposal Guidelines for the Creation of a New Graduate Certificate Program**

## **A. Review and Approval Procedures**

Faculty considering creation of a new GAC or GAUC should agree on a definition and description of the GAC/GAUC and meet with the Dean of Graduate Studies (or his/her designee) and the Graduate Studies Policy Analyst to discuss the nature of the graduate certificate program, the mechanism and format of proposal preparation, and the processes of review, approval, and implementation.

### **1. Graduate Studies Preview**

Proposals for a new GAC/GAUC should be “previewed” by the Dean of Graduate Studies (or his/her designee) and the Graduate Studies Policy Analyst, to ensure that the proposal contains the necessary information. The purpose of this step is to identify problems that may slow the formal proposal review process.

### **2. Graduate Council Approval**

Proposals are formally reviewed by Graduate Council's Educational Policy Committee prior to submission to the Graduate Council for campus approval.

### **3. Coordinating Committee on Graduate Affairs (CCGA) Approval - GAC Only**

**After obtaining campus approval, proposals for new GACs must undergo review at the system level by CCGA for final approval. CCGA review is not required for GAUC proposals.**

## **B. Proposal Format**

If the proposal is offered through a graduate degree program, a cover letter from the Chair of the program which indicates the date and supporting vote of the program members should accompany the proposal. The proposal should be prepared in the following format:

**NAME OF CERTIFICATE PROPOSED**  
**TYPE OF CERTIFICATE (GAC OR GAUC)**  
**DATE OF PROPOSAL**  
**Graduate Council Approval:**

**I. Description of the Graduate Academic Certificate Program (GAC or GAUC)**

Provide a brief description of the program's purpose and distinctive features, including target audience. This description should explain how it is related to existing academic programs, and how this program differs from others offered by the Davis campus.

**II. Description of the Academic Nature of the GAC/GAUC**

This description will include several elements:

**A. Administration and Affiliated Faculty**

If the certificate is offered through an approved graduate degree program, the affiliated faculty and committees shall be the same for the GAC/GAUC and the degree program (administration of the GAC/GAUC may be delegated to a subcommittee as noted above). The Chair shall be the same for the GAC/GAUC and the degree program.

**1. Administration**

Identify the roles and responsibilities and participants in the following positions:

- Faculty Chair
- Executive Committee *\*Note: A GAC/GAUC offered through a graduate program should indicate if the graduate program Executive (or Graduate Program) Committee will fill this role, or whether the graduate program intends to create a GAC/GAUC subcommittee.*
- Program Staff

**2. Affiliated Faculty**

Provide a summary and a roster of faculty who intend to participate in the GAC/GAUC. Request a letter from each faculty member who intends to participate. This letter should indicate the intent to participate and agreement to participate in GAC/GUAC functions such as teaching and/or administration. Faculty support for the GAC/GAUC is considered critical. The level of participation of affiliated faculty will be a major factor considered in graduate certificate program reviews.

If the GAC/GAUC is offered by a graduate degree program, supporting letters from individual faculty in that program are not required; a cover letter documenting a faculty vote in favor of the administration of the GAC/GAUC by the graduate program is sufficient.

**B. Admissions Criteria**

Describe the criteria used to determine admission of students to the GAC/GAUC, the expected audience for the program, and the number of students expected to request admission each year.

GAC: To meet the minimum requirements for admission into a GAC, applicants must have a bachelor's degree or its equivalent, or a higher degree. For direct entry students, they must be acceptable for admission to the Graduate Division. For students concurrently enrolled in a graduate or professional program, they must be an active student in good academic standing (e.g., GPA of 3.00 or better). GAUC: To meet the minimum requirements for admission into a GAUC, applicants must be registered and enrolled in a graduate degree program at UC Davis and must be in good academic standing (e.g., GPA of 3.0 or better).

The certificate program (GAC or GAUC) may include additional program criteria beyond the minimum requirements indicated above (e.g., higher than 3.0 GPA, writing sample, etc.). These additional requirements must be clearly defined and applied equitably for all

applicants.

Include the application process for students with due dates and a timeline for acceptance. Describe the make-up of the Admissions Committee for the GAC/GAUC.

### **C. Certificate Requirements**

The proposed requirements and curriculum should be described to include the following:

#### **1. Required Courses:**

List required courses and the unit value of each. Indicate whether the required courses are new or existing courses. For new courses, include the course description and indicate whether these have been submitted online through the Web-based course approval system. Any new courses required for a GAC/GAUC must be reviewed and approved by the Graduate Council Courses Committee and the Academic Senate Committee on Courses of Instruction.

**GAC:** The GAC curriculum shall consist of a minimum of 12 graduate-level instructional units. However, students must meet the full-time residence requirement (SR 735). For students who are directly admitted into the GAC, the student must be enrolled in at least 12 units of upper division and/or graduate courses for three quarters.

For students who are concurrently enrolled in a graduate or professional degree program, the certificate should not add more than one quarter to the student's time-to-degree. Include a sample schedule to show how a concurrently enrolled graduate or professional student will integrate the certificate program requirements with regular program requirements.

**GAUC:** The GAUC curriculum shall consist of a minimum of 12 graduate-level instructional units. Accordingly, a certificate should not add more than one quarter to the student's time-to-degree. Include a sample schedule to show how a student will integrate the certificate program requirements with regular program requirements.

Should any required course be offered by an instructional unit that is not the administrating program, then an MOU from that instructional unit stating that they have reviewed the GAC/GAUC proposal and agree to allow GAC/GAUC students to enroll in the course is required.

The required curriculum will be reviewed as part of the proposal review process, and any subsequent changes must be submitted to and approved by Graduate Council.

#### **2. Elective Courses**

List allowable elective courses and their unit value. Indicate whether the elective courses are new or existing courses. For new courses, include the course description, and indicate whether these have been submitted online for review.

#### **3. Other Requirements**

Identify any other requirements beyond coursework.

### **D. Student Advising and Monitoring Progress**

**1. Student Advising:** Include a description by which the GAC/GAUC will oversee the academic progress of students in the program. For example, describe the role of the Graduate Advisor and/or advising committee if a part of this program.

**2. Monitoring Student Progress:** How will student progress be monitored? Include timeline, process, and student notification in the event of unsatisfactory progress.

**3. Informing Students:** For currently enrolled graduate or professional students who are eligible to apply for a graduate certificate program (GAC or GAUC), the certificate program should provide information concerning: a) when in the student's graduate career they should start taking classes, b) if there is a deadline by which they must apply, and c) who they should contact with any questions regarding the certificate program, d) how the certificate is advertised.

For a GAC, some form of advertisement or open information session should be put in place so that **all** eligible students are informed. Describe how this will be done.

#### **E. Resources**

The proposal should address the issue of resources required to run the GAC/GAUC. If no additional resources are required, this should be stated. If additional resources are required, they should be described, and the source of support for these resources should be identified. Resources include the administrative support for record keeping (for example, lists of current and former students and current faculty members) and preparation of materials required for the periodic reviews by Graduate Council's Program Review Committee.

*Include a letter of support or MOU from the appropriate academic dean(s) that addresses resource issues.*