A. Introduction

The graduate certificate is a focused collection of courses that, when completed, affords the student a record of coherent academic accomplishment in a given discipline or set of related disciplines. The didactic material encompassed within a graduate certificate program may represent a more practice-oriented subset of an existing graduate discipline. The graduate certificate requires fewer credits than a master’s degree.

B. Issues to be Considered when Developing a Graduate Certificate Program.

- What is the focus of study for the certificate?

- Who are the intended participants in the program? What prior expertise or education is required for students?

- How will the certificate program be delivered – through existing courses from several departments, through courses supplemented by an interdisciplinary introduction or capstone source?

- How will the program be administered? Who oversees the budget, curriculum design, registration paperwork, etc.?

- How will the program be financed? What is the funding source for creating the program and offering it?

C. Criteria for Graduate Certificate Programs

- The proposed sequence of coursework must offer a clear program mission at the post-baccalaureate level.

- The proposed program will define student learning outcomes and how learning outcomes will be assessed, including data to be targeted, assessment measures, and timelines.

- Explain why the university needs to offer this program. Include target audience and market; discuss local, regional and national need for the program; and provide evidence that a completed certificate is expected to lead to gainful employment.
• An appropriate number of graduate academic credits (12 or more) must comprise the certificate program. No more than one 400-level NAU course (3 credit or 4 credit) may be used on a certificate program. A minimum grade point average of 3.0 must be achieved to obtain a graduate certificate. No more than three hours of work with a grade of C may be used toward a certificate program.

• Each graduate program must decide which, if any, certificate courses can be counted toward the graduate degree after admission of a certificate student into the graduate degree program.

• No more than 25% of the hours required for the certificate program may be transferred from another university and must comply with graduate transfer credit policy.

D. Student Eligibility and Admission Criteria

• Applicants must hold an earned baccalaureate degree or its equivalent from an accredited college or university with a minimum grade point average of 3.0 as required by the Graduate College or equivalent qualifying experience.

• The application process for certificate-seeking graduate students is similar to that for degree-seeking students. Applicants must complete an application for admission to the Graduate College as a degree/certificate seeking student, pay the application processing fee and submit transcripts. They must also submit all other materials required by the certificate program. The application is reviewed by the certificate program. If admission is recommended, an admission letter is issued by the Graduate College.

• Graduate students who are currently enrolled in a graduate program of study leading to a degree and who wish to also earn a graduate certificate must also apply for the certificate.

• Each program sets the minimum admissions requirements for the certificate (e.g. grade point average, standardized test scores, work experience, etc.). Greater flexibility than that found in graduate degree admission requirements is intentionally built into graduate certificate programs so that the needs of the target student population may be met, if it is appropriate to do so.

• Students who are admitted to a graduate certificate program will be eligible for the official posting of the graduate certificate to their transcripts when all applicable coursework has been successfully completed and approved by the academic unit and the Graduate College by the graduation application deadline set for each semester.

An academic unit will submit the information necessary for the official posting of the graduate certificate to the student’s transcript directly to the Graduate College on the student’s behalf by the graduation application deadline each semester. Please note that students are ultimately responsible for ensuring official posting of the graduate certificate to their transcript when all applicable coursework for the graduate has been successfully completed.
E. Proposal Procedure for a New Certificate Program

Proposals for new graduate certificate programs must contain the following information:

- A statement of the program mission;
- Student learning outcomes and how learning outcomes will be assessed, including data to be targeted, assessment measures, and timelines.
- Explain why the university needs to offer this program. Include target audience and market; discuss local, regional and national need for the program; and provide evidence that a completed certificate is expected to lead to gainful employment.
  The catalog wording for the certificate program (on the NAU Proposal for New Program or Program Change Form); and appropriate new course or course change forms for new and modified courses;
- A statement of the proposed course sequence for the certificate (if not included in the catalog wording); and how the proposed course sequence will meet the stated educational objectives;
- A program of study;
- A statement of the admission criteria and standards for the certificate program;
- The names of the faculty associated with or contributing to the certificate program, either by teaching one or more of the courses associated with the program or participating in the design of the course sequence. Adjunct faculty associated with the program should also include up-to-date curriculum vita. The name of the faculty member who will be the coordinator of the program should be included.

F. Approval Process for New Graduate Certificate Programs

Proposals for new graduate certificate programs are created and submitted by faculty, either from a department or several departments working as an interdisciplinary group. Proposals must be accompanied by endorsement from the department chairs and deans in which the contributing coursework is housed. The Review Subcommittee of the University Graduate Committee considers all graduate certificate program proposals. Those meeting the criteria set forth above are then recommended to the University Graduate Committee for approval.

G. Certificate Program Review

Graduate certificate programs housed in departments that also offer graduate degrees are reviewed as part of the university program review process.

Graduate certificate programs housed in institutes or other units that do not offer graduate degrees will undergo a review by the Review Subcommittee of the University Graduate Committee every fourth year after approval. The unit(s) offering the certificate will submit a short report that includes:
• Enrollment history of the certificate (number enrolled each fall semester) and the degree to which enrollments reflect projected enrollments based on the original proposal or the most recent certificate review.

• Statistics on the number of certificates awarded (from the Graduate College website).

• Average length of time to earn the certificate.

• Number of certificate students enrolled solely in the certificate and the number of certificate students concurrently enrolled in an NAU degree program.

• Program learning outcomes of the certificate program as stated in the proposal, including data gathered, assessment measures, and timelines.

• Impact of the certificate on the department’s resources.

• Data on gainful employment, advancement, and, if applicable, licensing for students who completed the certificate.

• Any needed changes in the program to meet unit, college, university, or market needs.