

## Curricular Affairs Committee of the Faculty Senate

### MEMO

**To:** The UVM Faculty Senate  
**From:** Curricular Affairs Committee of the Faculty Senate, Laura Almstead, Chair  
**Date:** September 3, 2020  
**Re:** Approval of a proposal from the Graduate College for a new graduate-level credential titled a Micro-Certificate of Graduate Study (mCGS)

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On September 3, 2020, the Curricular Affairs Committee approved the actions recommended in the following memo.

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The Curricular Affairs Committee approved a proposal from the Graduate College for a new graduate-level credential called a Micro-Certificate of Graduate Study (mCGS). The proposal was approved by the Graduate College Executive Committee. Additionally, the College of Education and Social Services (CESS) and the Public Health program both indicated that mCGSs would be a good way to attract new graduate students, and each submitted an example proposal for a mCGS. If approved by the Faculty Senate and Board of Trustees, the credential will be in place for spring 2021.

Full Certificates of Graduate Study (CGS) are intended to enhance the educational opportunities for students enrolled in graduate programs at UVM, and to provide opportunities for non-matriculated students to develop professional skills that will enhance their career options. A CGS is comprised of 15 to 21 credits of coursework, including a minimum of 9 credits of core courses. The goal of the new mCGS credential is to provide students with the opportunity to take a smaller, more specific core set of courses that can either stand alone as an independent credential or be used towards the completion of an existing Certificate of Graduate Study.

The proposed Micro-CGS credential would require 9 to 14 credits with a minimum of 6 credits common to all students, and 3 to 8 credits of required or elective credits selected from a small, published set of courses. Nine credits of a mCGS must be graded, and all credits must be from UVM; non-UVM credits could be transferred towards completion of a mCGS. For mCGSs requiring at least 12 credits, students would be able to transfer 3 to 5 credits taken as a non-degree student towards completion of the mCGS. The number of credits required for a micro-CGS, and the distribution of courses into core and elective components must be specified at the time of approval and not vary between students enrolled in the mCGS. Credits used for an mCGS could be applied toward an appropriate Certificate of Graduate Study, master's, or doctoral degree at UVM, and vice versa; however, credits taken for one mCGS could not be used to fulfill requirements for another mCGS.

Students applying for a mCGS would follow the same process as for Certificates of Graduate Study, and applications reviewed in a similar manner. At least one faculty member responsible for admissions

and advising for the program would need to be a member of the UVM Graduate Faculty. To enroll in a mCGS, students would need to be at the post-baccalaureate level, admitted to the Graduate College, and enrolled in the mCGS before taking the final 9 credits. To receive the credential, students would also need to maintain a minimum 3.00 GPA.

The proposal and approval processes for an mCGS would follow the same procedures as for Certificates of Graduate Study. Proposals must be reviewed and approved by the appropriate departmental and unit-level curriculum committees, the Graduate College Executive Council, and the Faculty Senate Curricular Affairs Committee. Approval by both the Faculty Senate and Board of Trustees would also be required. Faculty developing a proposal for a new Certificate of Graduate Study would be encouraged to include a parallel proposal for one or more mCGS if desired. For an mCGS comprised of a subset of requirements for an existing Certificate of Graduate Study, proposers could submit a memo specifying the core and additional courses with a description of how the courses fit together as a cohesive curriculum rather than writing a full proposal. Any significant changes to a mCGS would need to undergo the review and approval process for substantial changes to existing academic programs.

Micro-CGSs would be evaluated biannually by program faculty to determine whether the curriculum provides students the ability to meet the specified learning outcomes. Additionally, mCGSs would be reviewed as part of the Academic Program Review process when graduate programs of the home unit are reviewed.

In summary, establishing a Micro-Certificate of Graduate Study would provide students the opportunity to earn a credential by taking a small, specific set of courses that could then be applied towards completion of another graduate-level program. It would also provide students the ability to demonstrate graduate-level success with a lower risk than a full Certificate of Graduate Study or master's program. The Graduate College believes this will be a popular option for adult learners thinking of going to graduate school.