

**School for Graduate Studies and Research**

**Proposal for the Policy for the Establishment of Graduate Certificate Programmes**

**Background**

In keeping with the current Strategic Plan and its goal to increase access to graduate education, the School is articulating a policy to guide the development of non-degree and degree based Graduate Certificate programmes.<sup>1</sup> The UWI currently offers post DM and fellowship certificates and some academic departments/institutes offer professional development certificates but these are outside the scope of this policy.

Over the last six years, there has been a consistent call for short programmes from our regional and international donors. It is becoming clearer that in order to facilitate capacity-building, The UWI needs to provide short programmes to equip candidates with advanced technical or other specialised skills. This would also provide affordable alternatives for graduate education that are not yet present in The UWI postgraduate offerings.

**Purpose and Scope**

The introduction of Graduate Certificates would serve to advance the University's academic goals and objectives and address the growing demand by society, the public and private sectors, local and international donors and professional and academic sectors for specialised, flexible, and accessible education, as well as to complement existing Masters and Doctoral programmes.

The Graduate Certificate would, on the one hand, suit the candidate who, for a variety of reasons may be reluctant to commit the time and financial resources to pursuing a postgraduate degree, but may want to acquire the specialised body of knowledge that Graduate Certificates provide. The Graduate Certificate would also will fill a void for those persons who, having already earned a postgraduate degree and have no interest in pursuing another, need to obtain the knowledge and professional advantages associated with earning a certificate in a specific area.

The data retrieved from the four (4) campuses indicate that there are UWI departments which offer Graduate Certificates, but these are mostly non-Senate approved and are few in number.<sup>2</sup> Some of these certificate programmes are offered in collaboration with other local or international entities/universities, and they range from three (3) credit to seventeen (17) credit programmes.

**Definition of Graduate Certificate**

A Graduate Certificate programme is a focussed collection of graduate level academic courses that provide advanced skills, and technical and specialised knowledge in an area or field that can be taken for credit by lifelong learners or current degree programme students. A Graduate Certificate is not a postgraduate degree.

---

<sup>1</sup> Graduate Certificate programmes are also referred to, in some literature, as either Certificate of Graduate Study, Certificate of Advanced Graduate Study, Certificate of Advanced Study or Short Programmes.

<sup>2</sup> Non-Senate approved means not approved by the BGSR.

Graduate Certificate programmes constitute an integrated curriculum, but are not necessarily aligned to a specific academic programme; they may exist within programmes, bridge programmes or offer content widely useable across programmes. Graduate Certificates may be directed to both degree seeking and non-degree seeking students. They can be designed for post-baccalaureate, post-masters or post-doctoral studies, and is strictly dependent upon the academic Department's ability to establish the viability of the Graduate Certificate for any or all of the target groups.

### **Policy**

1. Graduate Certificates are given in recognition of graduate work conforming to a specified programme of study. Proposals for new Graduate Certificate programmes are created by academic departments/schools/academy/institutes and submitted for approval to the Board for Graduate Studies and Research.
2. Graduate Certificates shall require 12 to 15 credits of designated graduate work. The coursework should be graded. A minimum grade of C or a GPA of 2.0 must be maintained on all graded course work in the certificate programme. Graduate Certificate programmes are not eligible for the award of distinction.
3. Laddering of Graduate Certificate courses is allowed into the Postgraduate Diploma or Taught Masters programmes. However, Graduate Certificate courses should account for no more than fifty (50%) of the Postgraduate Diploma or Taught Masters programme (consistent with *The UWI Procedures for Transitioning from Post-Graduate Diplomas to Masters Programmes (2011) – BGSR.P.18/2009-2010*).
  - (a) All indications for laddering a Graduate Certificate programme must be made clear in the programme proposal. Any changes to the proposal must be resubmitted to the BGSR for consideration and approval.
4. Interdisciplinary and Inter-institutional Graduate Certificate programmes are encouraged.
5. An applicant for admission to a Graduate Certificate programme must meet the following minimum requirements:
  - (a) A bachelor's degree from a fully accredited college or university,
  - (b) An undergraduate GPA of at least 2.0 or a Pass degree (exceptions may be granted to this requirement as per Regulations 1.5(c) in *The UWI Regulations for Graduate Diplomas and Degrees (2014)*)'
6. An applicant may be a matriculated graduate student or a specially-admitted student.

The Graduate Certificate programme offers greater flexibility than postgraduate degrees with respect to admission requirements, and creates an opportunity for The UWI to respond to the target student population if it becomes necessary or appropriate to do so. It should also be made clear that successful completion of a Graduate Certificate programme is not a guarantee of entry into a graduate diploma or degree programme, but courses comprising a Graduate Certificate may be used as evidence in support of a student's application for admission to a graduate degree programme.

### **Approval Process**

When new Graduate Certificates are proposed, they will undergo the full process of curriculum review regardless of the delivery method (i.e., the residential campuses or the Open Campus). Special

requirements for applicants may be negotiated between the certificate proposing programme and the Board at the time the programme is proposed. Graduate Certificate must be accomplished within 2 years, unless departmental criteria for the certificate necessitate a longer time. Graduate Certificate programmes that require an exception to this 2-year time limit must be approved by the Board.

Consistent with the Board's policy, not only must the content of the proposed certificate be appropriate, but the availability of faculty to teach the courses in the certificate must be documented. Proposals for Graduate Certificate programmes must identify a specific person who will serve as coordinator. Certificates that bridge departments must have a home department to which all certificate applicants apply, but each affiliated department must also designate a coordinator. Students who fulfill all requirements for a Graduate Certificate will have the certificate noted on their transcript when the Board through the Director (Graduate Studies and Research) receives correspondence signed by the Graduate Certificate Programme Coordinator documenting the successful completion of all certificate requirements.

### **Proposals for New Graduate Certificate Programmes**

- I. Proposals for new Graduate Certificate programmes are developed by academic Departments/Schools/Academy/Centres/Institutes and submitted for approval to the Board for Graduate Studies and Research. All proposals shall be submitted using the template prescribed by the Board (i.e. *The UWI Guidelines for Submission of Taught Graduate Programme Proposals (2011) BGSR.P.9*). In addition to the guidelines, the documentation shall include the name and contact of the designated Programme Coordinator, for purposes of communication with the School for Graduate Studies and Research.
- II. During the first three (3) years of the Graduate Certificate programme, an annual report will be sent to the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Graduate Studies and Research) through the Chair of the Campus Committee for Graduate Studies and Research, to include the following information:
  - (a) Number of students enrolled by year;
  - (b) Number of matriculated/non-matriculated students;
  - (c) Summary of credentials and academic records (i.e., GPA, Class of Degree, etc.) of enrolled students;
  - (d) Number of certificates awarded by year;
  - (e) The GPA/Class of Degree of the graduate candidate on completion of the programme.
- III. All Graduate Certificate programmes will be reviewed within the course of regular programme reviews conducted by the Quality Assurance Unit.
- IV. Interdisciplinary and Inter-institutional Graduate Certificate programmes are encouraged.

May 2018