

Policy on Graduate Certificate and Degree Programs

Purpose - The purpose of establishing a policy on graduate certificates is to provide a clear and comprehensive framework that governs the development, implementation, and evaluation of graduate certificate programs at the University of Maryland Eastern Shore. This policy aims to enhance academic rigor and ensure that all graduate certificates offered meet the highest standards of quality and relevance in alignment with industry needs and educational best practices.

Definitions:

PBC - Post baccalaureate degree

PMC- Post master's degree

UDC - Upper division certificate

1. Application and Fee Waivers

- Non-degree seeking students who wish to pursue a certificate or degree must submit an application for admission or readmission (see section 5). The application fee may be waived under certain conditions.
- Degree-seeking students who wish to pursue a certificate must submit an application for admission.

Note: A student must submit a separate application for each degree they are seeking.

2. Financial Aid Eligibility

- Financial aid is not available for students pursuing ONLY a certificate.

4. Certificate Diploma and Fees

- Students completing a certificate program will receive a certificate diploma, for a fee. This fee structure will be finalized later in collaboration with Parchment, and is subject to change each semester. There is currently no option for students completing certificates by December 2024.

5. Application Procedures for Certificate Programs

- **New Students:** Apply via the online application portal (<https://gradapply.umes.edu/>) for available certificate programs.
- **Active Students:** Currently enrolled students (including non-degree) must reapply to join a certificate program. An application fee may apply.
- **Inactive Students:** Inactive students who submit their readmissions application must select their specific interest in a certificate program during that process.

- **Previous Students:** The applicability of prior UMES course credits towards the certificate will be determined by the Office of Graduate Studies.
- **Transfer Students:** Up to three credit hours from another university may be transferred into a UMES certificate program, subject to approval.
- **Change of Major Students:** Active students (including non-degree), inactive students, or previous students can apply to a certificate program, or change their major to a certificate program, by submitting the appropriate form(s) to the University. Students must be accepted into the certificate program prior to the add/drop deadline for the semester of their final certificate course. Students need to be aware that their financial aid eligibility could be impacted pending on their change of major decision.

NOTE: Please see the completion timeline criteria. This applies to all students mentioned above.

6. Handling Concurrent Enrollment

- If a student is nearing completion of a master's degree and wishes to pursue a certificate, they should:
 - Apply for the certificate program.
 - Ensure the certificate program does not interfere with their graduation timeline.

7. Graduate Certificate Policies

- **Credit Requirements:** Complete a minimum of 12 credit hours, with at least 9 credit hours at the 600 level or above.
- **Course Requirements:** Core and non-core (elective) courses must be chosen from designated lists.
- **Grade Requirements:** A minimum GPA of 3.0 is required.
- **Completion Timeline:** Once students are accepted into a certificate program at UMES, all certificate courses must be completed within five calendar years from the end of the semester or summer session in which the coursework being applied toward the certificate began. This does not apply to previous coursework which is described in the course applicability criteria below.
- **Course Applicability:** Certificate courses may count towards a master's degree if they meet specific conditions and are approved by the Office of Graduate Studies. UMES can accept up to 9 credits of previous coursework at UMES towards graduate certificates. Previous UMES certificate courses must have been completed within 7 years of the completion of all certificate program requirements. Students who previously completed all courses required for a certificate program are not eligible to apply for the certificate.

8. Stacking a Certificate toward a Degree

You may decide to earn a certificate on your way to a degree by choosing courses required for a certificate that also count toward a related master's.

9. Transfer Credits for Certificates

- Up to three credit hours from other accredited institutions may be transferred, subject to program director or coordinator approval.

10. Application for Master's Programs Post-Certificate

- Students wishing to pursue a master's degree after completing a certificate must reapply for admission to the master's program. Certificate courses may also be applied toward a graduate degree pending the program of study criteria. Consult the prospective department for specific curriculum requirements and admission timelines.

11. Change of Major Form versus Change of Career

- Undergraduate students interested in the PBC, PMC, UDC, or PHD must submit an application through Graduate Admissions.
- Students already accepted and enrolled within the School of Graduate Studies and are interested in adding the PBC, UDC, or PMC may submit a Change of Major Form.
- Students enrolled in Master's degree program and are interested in pursuing a doctoral degree must submit an application through Graduate Admissions.

UG ---> PBC, UDC, PMC - career

GR ----> (double major) - MA plus PBC, PMC, UDC, PHD

GR ----> MA to PHD - degree change