GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Texas State University is committed to maintaining an effective process for curricular development of academic certificates and for accurate reporting from those certificate programs as required by state and federal regulatory agencies. This PPS provides guidance for adding, changing, deleting, and reporting certificate data, and is intended to help ensure the academic integrity of curricular development. Certificates as defined in this PPS are independent academic credentials subject to the standards of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), including those for academic program coordination, faculty qualifications, administrative oversight and outcomes assessment.

2. When considering a request for the addition, change, or deletion of an academic certificate, faculty members should consult the Department Chairs/Program Directors/School Directors and College Deans in their academic administrative unit and in other related programs, and if necessary, with outside experts.

3. This PPS conforms to the policies, procedures, rules and regulations of The Texas State University System, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), SACSCOC, and the U.S. Department of Education.

CRITERIA AND DEFINITIONS
(in alphabetical order)

4. Academic Administrative Unit: A program, department, college, or school that has administrative authority over the certificate.

5. Academic Certificate: Any grouping of courses other than a degree, that when satisfactorily completed by a student, shall entitle him/her to a certificate or documentary evidence of completion of a post-secondary course of study. Certificates must meet the needs of the workforce by preparing students for gainful employment in a recognized occupation. Certificates must also meet the standards of all relevant state agencies or licensing bodies that have oversight over the certificate.

6. Baccalaureate-Level (Undergraduate) Certificate: A certificate that consists primarily of upper-division courses in disciplinary areas where the university
usually offers an undergraduate degree program. Undergraduate certificates require completion of a formal program of study that generally includes at least 16 weeks of instruction, prepares students for gainful employment in a recognized occupation, and leads to a recognized educational credential.

7. **CIP Code:** Each academic certificate is assigned a Texas Classification of Instructional Program (CIP) code that corresponds to the subject matter of the certificate. The Texas adaptation of the CIP taxonomy is developed by the National Center for Education Statistics and is used nationally to classify instructional programs and report educational data. CIP codes reflect the content of the certificate, and not the academic administrative unit in which the certificate is offered. The CIP code of baccalaureate-level and graduate-level certificates must match the CIP code assigned to the degree program of the same academic discipline and level that is found in the program inventory. The CIP codes and the national manual definitions are available on the THECB website at: [http://www.txhighereddata.org/Interactive/CIP/](http://www.txhighereddata.org/Interactive/CIP/)

8. **Gainful Employment (GE) Program:** An education program that must lead to a recognized occupation.

9. **Graduate-Level Certificate:** A certificate that consists primarily of graduate-level courses in disciplinary areas where the university usually offers a graduate program. Graduate certificates require completion of a formal program of study that generally includes at least 10 weeks of instruction, prepares students for gainful employment in a recognized occupation, and leads to a recognized educational credential.

10. **Graduate-level Courses:** Academic credit courses that are offered at the master’s level.

11. **Program Inventory:** The official list of all approved degree programs for the university.

12. **Standard Occupational Classification (SOC):** The name of the U.S. Department of Labor’s code of the occupations that the certificate prepares students to enter.

13. **Upper-division Courses:** Academic credit courses that are offered at the junior and senior level.

14. **Workforce Need:** There should be a demonstrated and well-documented need for the certificate in terms of present and future workforce needs. The certificate should provide the students with skills and/or knowledge that shall be useful for their lives or careers.

**ACADEMIC CERTIFICATE PROPOSALS**
15. **Proposals:** The Program Request Form is available via the website of the Office of Curriculum Services at this address: http://www.txstate.edu/curriculumservices/programs/program-forms.html

16. **Required Proposal Information:** Proposing a new academic certificate requires the following information:
   - Academic administrative unit with oversight of the proposed certificate
   - CIP code
   - SOC code
   - narrative description of the job market or workforce need and how the need is determined
   - estimation of student demand and enrollment projections for the first 5 years of the program
   - admission requirements
   - curriculum with required and elective courses
   - names of the faculty teaching the required and elective courses along with their credentials
   - name of the academic program coordinator and qualifications
   - evaluation of library resources, facilities, and equipment
   - description of the accreditation or licensure, if applicable
   - costs and funding for the first 5 years of the program including tuition and formula funding
   - support letters from interested business committees or boards, industrial advisory boards, or businesses regarding the proposal, if applicable.

**PROPOSAL ROUTING**

17. Certificate proposals must be submitted for review through the channels listed below in the following order:
   a. Faculty
   b. Department/School Curriculum Committee (or Department/School Faculty if no Committee)
   c. Department Chair/Program Director/School Director
   d. College Curriculum Committee
   e. College Council
   f. College Dean
   g. Dean of The Graduate College (if applicable)
   h. Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs
   i. University Curriculum Committee
   j. Faculty Senate
   k. Council of Academic Deans
   l. Provost
   m. President
   n. Texas State University System Board of Regents
   o. Institutions within a 50-mile radius
18. **Attachment A** of this PPS shows the proposal routing listed above in a timeline format. A new certificate proposal typically takes approximately 9-12 months for the above reviews to be completed.

19. Baccalaureate-level certificates generally require a minimum of 16 semester credit hours in disciplinary areas where the university already offers an undergraduate degree program. Graduate-level certificates typically require a minimum of 8 semester credit hours in disciplinary areas where the university already offers a graduate degree program. The university does not offer financial aid for certificate-only students, i.e., students not concurrently enrolled in a degree program at the university.

20. The Curriculum Services, Institutional Research and Financial Aid and Scholarships staff work together to submit certificate proposals or other required documents to state and federal organizations, as necessary.

21. In the event that a certificate proposal receives a negative vote, or is denied at any level, the proposal will be returned to the originating faculty for review and possible revision(s) and can be resubmitted for future consideration.

**REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

22. After the proposed certificate is approved, certain curriculum-related data will be entered in the SIS system by the Curriculum Services staff.

23. Undergraduate students interested in pursuing a baccalaureate-level certificate must notify the department/school staff member and academic program coordinator administering the program of their intent to enroll in the certificate program. The department/school staff member then reviews the student’s admission eligibility according to the approved proposal to enroll in the certificate. If the undergraduate student is approved for admission to the baccalaureate-level certificate, the department/school staff member notifies the undergraduate Academic Advisor to assign the certificate code into the interested students’ SGASTDN record in the SIS system. Post-baccalaureate students interested in pursuing a graduate-level certificate should complete an admission application through Apply Texas for the graduate-level certificate. The Graduate College staff will follow the regular process of calculating GPAs and entering admissions decisions in the SIS system according to the approved proposal.

24. The academic program coordinator and the academic advisor for the program will advise interested students to enroll in the required and elective courses for the certificate.
25. After the undergraduate student completes the required and elective courses in the certificate, the student will submit a graduation application to the department/school staff, who then verifies that all requirements for the certificate have been satisfied by the student. Post-baccalaureate students will submit the graduation application to The Graduate College. Graduate College staff will follow the regular process used for clearing candidates.

26. Upon approval of the graduation application for undergraduate students, the department/school staff will notify the undergraduate Academic Advisor that all requirements have been met. The Academic Advisor will then enter the graduation information in the SIS system.

27. The Registrar's Office will print the certificate after receiving the graduation workflow report from the SIS system. The certificate will also be noted on the student's transcript.

28. The Office of Institutional Research is responsible for reporting the necessary enrollment and graduation information for the certificate programs to the THECB and the U.S. Department of Education per the deadlines as stated by the agencies.

CERTIFICATION STATEMENT

29. This PPS has been approved by the reviewer listed below and represents Texas State's Division of Academic Affairs policy and procedure from the date of this document until superseded.

Review Cycle: _____________________ Review Date: _____________________

Reviewer: _________________________ Date: _________________________

Approved: _________________________ Date: _________________________

Gene Bourgeois
Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs