

ACADEMIC DEFINITIONS AND NOMENCLATURE

Academic unit: an organizational entity encompassing a school, college, department of instruction, division within a college or within a department, interdepartmental group, or organized research unit.

Certificate and Diploma:

SMU offers both non-academic and academic certificates.

Non-academic certificate programs may or may not be under the auspices of the regular faculty of SMU. Typically they are referred to as continuing education or professional education certificates. These non-academic certificates are typically not based on academic courses and they are not recorded on the academic record maintained by the University Registrar. Records are the responsibility of the offering unit. These certificates are not part of the Inventory of Approved Academic programs.

Academic certificate programs are structured sets of courses and requirements in defined areas at the graduate level. They are under the auspices of the regular faculty. They generally are less demanding than a degree program because of fewer formal requirements such as fewer number of required courses and no thesis or comprehensive exam. The course requirements are academic courses, and the courses and the completed certificate are recorded on the academic record in the same manner as a degree. A certificate is provided to the student by the University Registrar and the student may participate in graduation ceremonies. These certificates are part of the Inventory of Approved Academic programs.

Diploma is an academic credential that is defined and handled in the same manner as an academic certificate. Please note that a Diploma is not a degree and is different than the physical diploma awarded degree recipients. Some programs prefer the terminology Diploma over Certificate. A physical diploma is provided the Diploma student by the University Registrar and the student may participate in graduation ceremonies. These Diplomas are part of the Inventory of Approved Academic programs.

School based academic certificates are certificates that are comprised of a very few academic courses and are recorded on the academic record as a Term Note. They are not recorded nor reported in the same manner as university based certificates. These certificates are established by approval of the school and have not gone through a university based review. The awarding of the physical certificate is the responsibility of the offering unit. The student may not participate in graduation ceremonies. These certificates are part of the Inventory of Approved Academic programs. Additional notes as of Fall 2010 regarding certificates:

Cox School of Business

There are no academic certificate programs used for tracking or academic records

Dedman College

The Intensive English Training – Undergraduate Certificate and Intensive English Training – Graduate Certificate are *two ESL certificate programs* are used for student program tracking in Access.SMU and reporting through SEVIS. *These do not result in certificates recorded on the academic record, but ESL students completing the program are awarded non-academic certificates by ESL.*

Women's and Gender Studies Graduate Certificate *is an academic graduate certificate offered by the Women's and Gender Studies Program in conjunction with Perkins Theology. This certificate is recorded on the academic record.*

Lyle School of Engineering

The Professional Certificates in Software Construction Engineering, Software Design Engineering, Software Engineering Fundamentals, Software Management, Software Requirements Engineering, and Software Testing & Quality Engineering are school based certificates.

Meadows School of the Arts

The Artist Certificate, Artist Diploma, and Performers Diploma offered by Music for each of the instrument and voice are academic certificates/diplomas.

Simmons School of Education & Human Development

The Dispute Resolution Certificate is an academic certificate.

The Certificate of Advance Graduate Study is an academic certificate for students with the *MLS degree*.

The Learning Therapy Certificate is an *academic certificate*.

Dedman School of Law

There are no academic certificate programs used for tracking or academic records

Perkins School of Theology

There are no academic certificate programs used for tracking or academic records, but they do have Certification Courses,CC, that they use.

The Guildhall

The certificates in Digital Game Design- Specialization in Art Creation, Digital Game Design- Specialization in Level Design, and Game Design- Specialization in Software Development are *academic certificates*. *Students can earn the certificate only, or earn the certificate and continue on and earn the masters degree.*

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College / School: an academic teaching unit, a part of the University, which offers instruction leading to a degree. The standard of admission is not less than the equivalent of a high school diploma for undergraduate studies and a bachelors degree for graduate and professional studies. At SMU by tradition, a college includes more than one department of instruction, and college and school mean the same thing.

Concentration: A concentration is a program of study within a degree program which emphasizes a specific area of the discipline. It is similar to a major but may not have as many course requirements. It is handled in the same manner as a major.

Degrees: represent a set of requirements approved by the faculty and board of trustees. A major can only be awarded Bachelor of Arts (B.A.)
Bachelor of Science (B.S.)
Etc.

Degree Program: A degree program (also called a major program) is a structured and sequenced set of courses and requirements leading to a degree at the undergraduate or graduate level. It is comprised of a general education component, the degree component and the major component. Every department at SMU offers at least one degree program, and some offer several. In addition, there are a number of interdisciplinary degree programs overseen by faculty from several departments of instruction within a school or college or between schools and colleges but under the leadership of at least one dean. Degrees are recorded on a student's diploma and transcript.

Department: (e.g., academic department and department of instruction): an administrative unit composed of budgeted faculty offering instruction in a titled, specialized discipline, and normally affiliated with a school or college. Departments offer curricula leading to academic degrees at the bachelor's, master's, professional and/or doctoral levels. Department (and school) faculties initiate recruitment and promotion actions for their respective units. A department has an established budget for instruction.

Diploma refers to the physical document awarded degree recipients. It also refers to the Diploma which is an academic credential – see Certificate and Diploma.

Division: a subunit of a college/school, incorporating a number of departments or disciplines. Some departments also may have divisions which are administrative subunit of the department composed of faculty members who have expertise and can offer instruction in a specific area within the discipline and typically have very limited autonomy in the determination of curriculum and policies.

Interdisciplinary Program: A distinctive academic unit, composed of faculty drawn from various departments representing various related fields of study and offering a degree in a specific field of study not represented by a department of instruction.

Major: Is set of requirements established by the faculty in the discipline and approved by the college/school. Majors are approved for specific degrees and can only be earned in conjunction with a degree. They are recorded on the academic record. A student can return after earning a degree and an additional major. A student can earn multiple majors by completing the requirements of each major. In doing this if the majors are authorized for different degrees, then the student must complete both degree requirements as well.

Minor Program: A minor program is intended as an optional program that encourages coherence in the work that an undergraduate student undertakes outside his/her major field(s) of study. A minor cannot be awarded without a major and a degree being awarded. Minors are recorded on the academic record. A student may complete one or more minor programs, normally in a field both academically and administratively distinct from his/her major. All minors, including interdisciplinary minors, are available to all students regardless of their major, with the exception that students may not minor in their major.

School / College: an academic teaching unit, a part of the University, which offers instruction leading to a degree. The standard of admission is not less than the equivalent of a high school diploma for undergraduate studies and a bachelors degree for graduate and professional studies. At SMU by tradition, a college includes more than one department of instruction, and college and school mean the same thing.

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Specialization [also, track, area, option, plan, etc.]: Some approved majors are sub-divided into specific fields or specialties. A specialization is a program of study which enables a student to focus on courses in a particular field within a degree program. The specialization pursued does not appear on the student's academic record unless it is designated as a major with a specialization.