

Graduate Credential Framework at the University of Regina

Preamble

The graduate credential framework is being modeled after the undergraduate framework that was taken to Executive of Council in May of 2021. FGSR has prepared the graduate proposal with input from:

- Dr. Nilgün Önder, Associate Vice-President (Academic)
- Registrar, James D'Arcy (Background and definitions)
- Glenys Sylvestre, Executive Director, University Governance and University Secretary
- The Micro-credentials Working Group
- Associate Deans Research Group
- The Council Committee on Academic Mission
- Deans' Council
- CCFGSR (for approval)

Background

The University of Regina Act (the "Act") provides authority to the University of Regina to award degrees and certificates. In Saskatchewan, unlike other provincial jurisdictions that have quality control bodies, such as Alberta and Ontario, the responsibility for the quality assurance that governs the academic content, credit hour requirements, minimum performance standards, and other specific regulations that contribute to the awarding of a credential is within the purview of the University of Regina Senate, in accordance with the Act.

At a provincial level, quality assurance boards can have additional responsibilities that include, but are not limited to:

- developing, maintaining, and enforcing accreditation standards;
- ensuring academic programming is reflective of current needs and trends;
- developing standardized credit hour requirements in the awarding of credentials and;
- ensuring duplication of program delivery is minimized, either provincially or regionally, within a province.

Introduction

The need for a credential framework at the University of Regina has been identified as a quality assurance measure that will guide the development of new academic programs and align the university with a more common understanding of the academic rigor required to complete and be awarded a credential. It provides reassurance to academic colleagues, licensure organizations, qualification agencies, and employers that they can be confident a credential has been awarded with common and consistent standards that are broadly recognized.

Additionally, as new opportunities arise for the University, defining *micro-credentials* is

essential to the university strategy to accommodate industry trends and needs, the needs of new Canadians who need a specific set of courses in addition to the educational credentials they possess, and for employers who want to upgrade the knowledge and skill sets of their employees.

This proposal will present a framework that will:

- establish specific credit hour requirements and provide consistency in the credit hour requirements for credentializing;
- create academic standards for credentializing that can be interpreted widely without misinterpretation by both internal and external audiences;
- provide guidelines so that Faculties have opportunities to establish credentials that align with new and contemporary trends;
- establish definitions that are consistent within the pan-Canadian landscape; and
- provide information that can be used by applicants to the University to make informed decisions about program enrolment and program opportunities.

Definitions

Collaborative Program. Refers to a formalized collaboration between the University of Regina and a partner institution to offer a degree program or a combined degree program. In this model, both institutions have general responsibilities in the development and the delivery of curriculum. It generally results in a U of R credential with recognition of the collaboration on the parchment issued: "In collaboration with **XXXXX**". This is also known as a Joint Program.

Cotutelle. Normally offered by two institutions under formal agreement leading to the outcome of two credentials, one from the U of R and one from the other institution.

Concentration. A focus within a program, usually within a major, comprising a cluster of courses on a particular theme or topic; or, a disciplinary component of a multidisciplinary degree program. For example: a major in Interdisciplinary Studies with concentrations in Visual Art, English, and Creative Technologies.

Credential. Refers to a degree, diploma, or certificate.

Joint Program. See Collaborative Program.

Major. Refers to the primary area of specialization in a degree program.

Micro-Credential. Refers to a series of courses in a specific subject area that provide opportunities for academic or professional development.

Residency. Residency refers to the minimum number of University of Regina credit hours that a student must complete within their credential completion requirements (see the Graduation section of the Academic Calendar for more information)

Graduate Credential Framework

Framework at a glance:

The graduate framework is presented here in short format. Please see the specific template on each for further information.

Credential Category	Level	Credit Hours	Parchment Nomenclature	Major †	Minor	Concentration	Distinction/Great Distinction	Honours/High Honours	Year of Study Equivalency
Micro-credential (Credit)	Graduate	Less than 9	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Variable
Certificate (Credit)	Graduate	9-14	"Graduate Certificate in"	Y	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1-2 Terms
Diploma (Credit)	Graduate	15-18	"Graduate Diploma in"	Y	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1 year
Master's Degree	Graduate	Minimum 30	"Master of"	Y	N/A	Variable for Interdisciplinary programs only	N/A	N/A	1-3 *
Doctor of Philosophy	Graduate	Minimum 60	"Doctor of Philosophy in"	Y	N/A	Variable for Interdisciplinary programs only	N/A	N/A	3-6 *
Doctor of XXXX	Graduate	Minimum 30	"Doctor of"	Y	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	3-5

† Major refers to the area of study. For example: Master's Certificate in Human Resource Management

* As stated in the [Saskatchewan Higher Education Quality Assurance Graduate Degree Level Standards](#) document, "Master's programs vary typically from two to six semesters, depending on the field and the speed at which individuals progress through requirements." and "A doctoral program is typically three to six years in length, depending on the field and the speed at which individuals progress through requirements."

Level: Graduate

Credential Category	Credit Hour Requirement	Parchment Nomenclature	Major Eligibility
Graduate Micro-credential	Less than 9 credit hours	N/A	N/A
Minor Eligibility	Specialization Eligibility	Concentration Eligibility	Distinction/Great Distinction
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Designation Eligibility	Course Level	Year of Study Equivalency	
Transcript notation: Credit Micro Credential in XXXXX No other notations apply	Graduate - Credit	Variable (e.g. less than 2 months for a compressed 3-credit hour course)	
Definition	Skill and knowledge development; professional development (i.e., development of specific skills, competencies, or knowledge in a specialized, focused area) (i.e. change management, equity and inclusion in the workplace, Indigenous business development, project management, organizational leadership).		
Major, Minor, Concentration, and Specialization Regulations	Majors, minors, concentrations, and specializations are not available in a micro-credential program.		
Admission Requirements	A graduating average of at least 70 per cent from a four-year Bachelor's degree (or equivalent) is required for admission to all programs.		

Graduate Credential Framework

Credential Category	Credit Hour Requirement	Parchment Nomenclature	Major Eligibility
Graduate Certificate	9 -15 credit hours	"Graduate Certificate in"	Variable
Minor Eligibility	Specialization Eligibility	Concentration Eligibility	Distinction/Great Distinction
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Designation Eligibility		Course Level	Year of Study Equivalency
Transcript notation: Graduate Certificate in XXXXXX No other notations apply		Graduate – Credit	Students normally complete in 1-2 semesters, and have a four-year time limit to complete.
Definition	Provide study in a focused area to enhance career competences and exposure to an area of focus, without committing to a master's program.		
Major, Minor, Concentration, and Specialization Regulations	Majors are determined by the line Faculty offering the certificate. Minors, concentrations, and specializations are not available.		
Admission Requirements	A graduating average of at least 70 per cent from a four-year Bachelor's degree (or equivalent) is required for admission to all programs.		

Credential Category	Credit Hour Requirement	Parchment Nomenclature	Major Eligibility
Graduate Diploma (credit)	15-18 credit hours	"Graduate Diploma in"	Variable
Minor Eligibility	Specialization Eligibility	Concentration Eligibility	Distinction/Great Distinction
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Designation Eligibility		Course Level	Year of Study Equivalency
Transcript notation: Graduate Diploma in XXXX No other notations apply		Graduate – Credit	Students normally complete in 1 year, and, have a four-year time limit to complete.
Definition	Provide study in a focused area to enhance career competencies and transition to an area of focus.		
Major, Minor, Concentration, and Specialization Regulations	Majors are determined by the line Faculty offering the diploma. Minors, concentrations, and specializations are not available. A graduate certificate may be embedded within a Master's degree program; students graduating from such a program would receive both credentials.		
Admission Requirements	A graduating average of at least 70 per cent from a four-year Bachelor's degree (or equivalent) is required for admission to all programs.		

Graduate Credential Framework

Credential Category	Credit Hour Requirement	Parchment Nomenclature	Major Eligibility
Master's Degree	Minimum 30 credit hours	"Master of"	Variable
Minor Eligibility	Specialization Eligibility	Concentration Eligibility	Distinction/Great Distinction
N/A	N/A	Variable (for Interdisciplinary only)	N/A
Designation Eligibility		Course Level	Year of Study Equivalency
Transcript notation: Master of XXXX in XXXX Co-op and International designations as applicable		Graduate – Credit	1-3 years with a five year time limit for thesis based, and a six year time limit for non-thesis based *
Definition	<p>A Master's degree program builds on the knowledge and competencies acquired during related undergraduate study, and requires more specialized knowledge and intellectual autonomy than a Bachelor's degree program. Much of the study undertaken at the Master's level will have been at, or informed by, the forefront of an academic or professional discipline. Students will have shown some originality in the application of knowledge, and they will understand how the boundaries of knowledge are advanced through research. They will be able to deal with complex issues, both systematically and creatively, and they will show independent capacity in addressing issues and problems.</p> <p>Research-oriented Master's programs are typically for graduates of related undergraduate or professional programs in the field, or students who have taken bridging studies to equip them for graduate study in the field; the focus is on developing the research, analytical, methodological, interpretive, and expository skills necessary for doctoral studies or for leadership in society. Some programs are thesis-based and require the student to develop and demonstrate advanced research skills under supervision. Others are course-based and require students to demonstrate the necessary research, analytical, interpretative, methodological, and expository skills in course exercises.</p> <p>Examples: Master of Arts (MA) programs in the humanities and social sciences; Master of Science (MSc) programs.</p> <p>Profession-oriented Master's programs normally admit students holding Bachelor's degrees and provide them with a selection of courses and exercises intended to prepare them for a particular profession or field of practice; or, if they are already involved in the profession or field, to extend their knowledge base and skills as professionals/practitioners.</p> <p>Example: Master of Social Work (MSW) programs.</p> <p>Definition adapted from the Saskatchewan Higher Education Quality Assurance Board.</p>		
Major, Minor, Concentration, and Specialization Regulations	Majors are determined by the line Faculty offering the degree. A graduate certificate may be embedded within a Master's degree program; students graduating from such a program would receive both credentials. Concentrations may apply to Interdisciplinary programs.		
Admission Requirements	A graduating average of at least 70 per cent from a four-year Bachelor's degree (or equivalent) is required for admission to all programs except for English, History, Mathematics and Statistics and the Master of Public Administration, where the required average is 75 per cent.		

* As stated in the [Saskatchewan Higher Education Quality Assurance Graduate Degree Level Standards](#) document, "Master's programs vary typically from two to six semesters, depending on the field and the speed at which individuals progress through requirements."

Graduate Credential Framework

Credential Category	Credit Hour Requirement	Parchment Nomenclature	Major Eligibility
Doctor of Philosophy Degree	Minimum of 60 credit hours	“Doctor of Philosophy”	Variable
Minor Eligibility	Specialization Eligibility	Concentration Eligibility	Distinction/Great Distinction
N/A	N/A	Variable (for Interdisciplinary only)	N/A
Designation Eligibility		Course Level	Year of Study Equivalency
Transcript notation: Doctor of Philosophy in XXXX		Graduate – Credit	3-6 years with a six year time limit *
Definition	<p>A doctoral program builds on the knowledge and competencies in a field or discipline acquired during prior study, usually at the graduate level. Study at the doctoral level is at the forefront of an academic or professional discipline.</p> <p>Holders of the doctoral degree must have demonstrated a high degree of intellectual autonomy, an ability to conceptualize, design, and implement projects for the generation of significant new knowledge and/or understanding, and an ability to create and interpret knowledge that extends the forefront of a discipline, usually through original research or creative activity.</p> <p>Preparation for doctoral work may involve coursework of varying length aimed at cultivating further conceptual depth or breadth. It may also involve written and oral examinations of knowledge and skills in aspects of the discipline prior to authorization to proceed to work on a dissertation.</p> <p>Research-oriented doctoral programs focus on the development of the conceptual and methodological knowledge and skills required to do original research and to make an original contribution to knowledge in the form of a dissertation. In some fields an internship or exhibition component may be required, but without diluting the significance of the dissertation as the primary demonstration of mastery. Such programs lead to the awarding of the PhD.</p> <p>Examples: PhD (Physics), PhD (Education), PhD (Kinesiology)</p> <p>Definition adapted from the Saskatchewan Higher Education Quality Assurance Board.</p>		
Major, Minor, Concentration, and Specialization Regulations	Majors are determined by the line Faculty offering the degree. Minors and specializations are not available in a doctoral degree; however, concentrations may apply to Interdisciplinary programs.		
Admission Requirements	<p>A graduating average of at least 70 per cent from a four-year Bachelor’s degree (or equivalent) is required for admission to all programs except for English, History, Mathematics and Statistics and the Master of Public Administration, where the required average is 75 per cent.</p> <p>Normally, applicants must have obtained a thesis-based Master's degree in the discipline to qualify as a doctoral student. Applicants must have academic credentials consistent with being fully-qualified to undertake graduate work at the doctoral level. The categories of probationary or qualifying student do not apply at the doctoral level.</p>		

* As stated in the [Saskatchewan Higher Education Quality Assurance Graduate Degree Level Standards](#) document, “A doctoral program is typically three to six years in length, depending on the field and the speed at which individuals progress through requirements.”

Graduate Credential Framework

Credential Category	Credit Hour Requirement	Parchment Nomenclature	Major Eligibility
Doctor of XXXX Degree	Minimum of 30 credit hours	“Doctor of XXXX”	Variable
Minor Eligibility	Specialization Eligibility	Concentration Eligibility	Distinction/Great Distinction
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Designation Eligibility		Course Level	Year of Study Equivalency
Transcript notation: Doctor of XXXX		Graduate – Credit	3-5 years with a six year time limit.
Definition	<p>A doctoral program builds on the knowledge and competencies in a field or discipline acquired during prior study, usually at the graduate level. Study at the doctoral level is at the forefront of an academic or professional discipline.</p> <p>Holders of the doctoral degree must have demonstrated a high degree of intellectual autonomy, an ability to conceptualize, design, and implement projects for the generation of significant new knowledge and/or understanding, and an ability to create and interpret knowledge that extends the forefront of a discipline, usually through original research or creative activity.</p> <p>Preparation for doctoral work may involve course work of varying length aimed at cultivating further conceptual depth or breadth. It may also involve written and oral examinations of knowledge and skills in aspects of the discipline prior to authorization to proceed to work on a dissertation.</p> <p>Practice-oriented doctoral programs are of a highly specialized and applied nature, relate to a professional or creative activity and, where there is an internship or exhibition requirement, may also require a dissertation or dissertation-in-practice. Doctoral programs with an orientation to practice typically involve more course work than doctoral programs with a more theoretical or disciplinary focus. Such programs lead to the award of a degree designation reflecting the field or discipline.</p> <p>Examples: EdD (Education), MusDoc (Music), PsyD (Psychology).</p> <p>Definition adapted from the Saskatchewan Higher Education Quality Assurance Board.</p>		
Major, Minor, Concentration, and Specialization Regulations	Majors are determined by the line Faculty offering the degree. Minors and specializations are not available in a doctoral degree; however, concentrations may apply to Interdisciplinary programs.		
Admission Requirements	<p>A graduating average of at least 70 per cent from a four-year Bachelor’s degree (or equivalent) is required for admission to all programs.</p> <p>Applicants must have obtained a Master’s degree in the discipline to qualify as a doctoral student. Applicants must have academic credentials consistent with being fully-qualified to undertake graduate work at the doctoral level. The categories of probationary or qualifying student do not apply at the doctoral level.</p>		