This Operating Instruction establishes the requirements to be followed for Graduate Certificate Programs, hereafter referred to as Graduate Certificates (GC). It outlines responsibilities of departments, faculty, and students involved in creating, offering, completing and awarding GCs by the Graduate School of Engineering and Management.

SUMMARY OF REVISIONS

The following changes were made to this operating instruction: (1) clarified academic requirements for the award of a graduate certificate, and (2) minor grammatical changes.

1. General Principles.

1.1. Graduate certificate programs are defined as a focused collection of courses that, when completed, affords the student some record of coherent academic accomplishment in a given discipline or set of related disciplines. The graduate certificate is not a degree; rather, it is simply a focused collection of courses proposed by the faculty and approved by the Dean. By grouping certain graduate courses, either within a department or across departments, the Graduate School of Engineering and Management can offer graduate certificate programs that can be linked to a variety of academic specializations and applications or military technologies, applications, or missions. The didactic material encompassed within a graduate certificate program may also represent a more practice-oriented subset of an existing graduate discipline. For the student, the certificate demonstrates proficiency in a body of knowledge useful to satisfy current or future professional requirements.
1.2. Two classes of GCs can be distinguished:

1.2.1. A certificate may be awarded in conjunction with a master's or doctoral degree. AFIT certificates awarded to students enrolled in an AFIT degree program shall consist of a coherent set of courses that can be used to satisfy AFIT degree requirements. Similarly regular AFIT courses used to satisfy the requirements for an AFIT degree can also be used to satisfy the requirements for an AFIT certificate program.

1.2.2. A certificate awarded for completing a specified program of post-baccalaureate or post-master's work, not constituting a regular graduate degree program, and awarded independently of a regular graduate degree.


2.1. Proposals for new graduate certificate programs are created and submitted by the Director of the proposed GC program. Detailed requirements for the GC proposal are provided in Attachment 1. The director of a proposed new GC program shall also consult with AFIT’s accreditation liaison to assess the need for external approvals and notifications prior to offering the program (ENOI 36-175).

2.2. GC proposals, along with AFIT Form 69 (Academic Program Summary), must be accompanied by endorsement from the Department Head and from those academic units whose students, programs, or faculty could be impacted by creation of the new graduate certificate. After Department approval, proposals are submitted to the Faculty Council’s Curriculum and Degree Requirements Committee (CDRC) for faculty review and approval in accordance with the Standing Rules of the CDRC.

2.3. The Dean is the final authority for approving or disapproving new Graduate Certificate programs.

2.3.1. If the GC proposal is disapproved, it is returned to the sponsoring faculty with comments from the Faculty Council.

2.3.2. Upon approval by the Dean, the proposal is sent to the Registrar’s Office for recording. The Registrar’s Office will notify the academic department when the program is activated.

2.4. Changes to GC programs are requested in accordance with the Standing Rules of the CDRC. Details of changes to these programs shall accompany the Form 69 which is used for coordination/approval purposes. GC program termination requires a justification which can be annotated on the Form 69.

3. Criteria for Approval of New Programs. The overarching principles applied to the assessment of the academic quality of proposals for new GC programs include:
3.1. The proposed sequence of coursework must offer a clear and appropriate educational objective at the post-baccalaureate level.

3.2. The proposed program will achieve its educational objective in an efficient and well-defined manner and define a means of assessing its educational objectives.

3.3. A demonstrated need for such a program must exist. This provision may be defined in terms of either external markets (i.e., external demand for the skills associated with such a certificate) or internal academic needs (i.e., the need for a critical mass of students in a given discipline).

3.4. An appropriate number of academic credits must comprise the certificate program. The number of graduate credits (courses numbering 500 or greater) may not be less than 12 or more than 24 quarter credit hours.

4. Additional Student Eligibility Criteria.

4.1. Students may not register for certificate program courses until either the Admissions office or the sponsoring program Director determines that the student meets the program’s stated admission requirements and the program has been approved by the Dean.

4.2. Individuals who are not currently enrolled in a degree program and wish to enroll in a GC must submit an application form to the Admissions Office. Department faculty will then evaluate the applicant’s preparedness for the program.

4.3. Students who are currently enrolled in a graduate program and wish to complete a certificate program:

   4.3.1. Students who complete certificate program requirements that are embedded in their degree program will automatically be placed into the certificate program by the Registrar.

   4.3.2. Students wishing to pursue an approved certificate program outside their degree program must complete a certificate registration form available on the Registrar’s web page (see Attachment 2). The request must be approved by the Director of the GC program or the responsible Department Head and then forwarded to the Registrar’s office. The Registrar will then add the Certificate program requirements to the student’s record.

5. Completion Requirements

5.1. Completion requirements are unique to each GC program. An approved Program Guide shall describe the criteria for successfully completing the GC program. All graduate certificate program students must have achieved and must maintain a minimum cumulative 3.0 (B) grade point average in all graduate certificate courses attempted in order for the
5.2. Students will normally complete all GC program requirements without transferring in courses outside AFIT. However, a maximum of 25% of the credit hours required of the GC program may be transferred from another institution where the normal transfer credit rules apply.

5.3. Completion of a graduate certificate does not guarantee admission into a graduate degree program. While the courses comprising a graduate certificate may be used as evidence in support of a student’s application for admission to a graduate degree program, the certificate itself is not considered to be a prerequisite.

6. Program Reviews. All graduate certificate programs will be reviewed within the course of the regular graduate program evaluation and review cycle as defined by the Office of Academic Affairs. Programs will be evaluated by the CDRC for the Faculty Council to determine if they are meeting their educational objectives via the assessment metrics defined at the time of their original approval or metrics that are introduced as part of regular program reviews. Programs that are not reapproved during the regular program review cycle may be terminated by the Dean.


7.1. The Dean retains the authority to grant graduate certificates. The recipients of such certificates must be recommended to the Head of the sponsoring department by the teaching faculty involved in the G.C. program in accordance with the criteria in the approved proposal signed by the Head and Dean. The sponsoring Department Head will certify a student's completion of a GC program by submitting conferral list to the Dean for review and signature.

7.2. Once approved by the Dean, the certificate conferral list is forwarded to the Registrar’s Office for processing of academic records and certificate generation. The Dean signs all certificates prior to conferral.

7.3. An AFIT Certificate of Graduate Study will be issued to students upon completion of an approved GC program. Such certificates will display the AFIT seal, and they will be signed by (1) the Head of the sponsoring department and (2) the Dean of the Graduate School of Engineering and Management. The GC will also display (3) the approved certificate program title, (4) the student’s full name, and (5) the date the student successfully completed the certificate program. (Attachment 3 shows an example.)

7.4. Certificates shall be printed by the Registrar’s Office.

7.5. The student’s official transcript shall contain not only the listing of courses taken for the GC program of study, but shall also indicate successful completion of the certificate program.

7.6. The process for conferral approval and certificate generation should adhere to the timelines established by the Registrar’s office for degree program graduations.
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Attachment:
1. Proposal Requirement
2. Request for Enrollment
3. Officially Recorded Graduate Certificate
Attachment 1

Proposal Requirements for Graduate Certificate Program

Proposal Requirements. Application materials for graduate certificate programs should be prepared in consultation with the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and should contain the following information:

1. Statement of Purpose: The statement should address educational and scholarly goals of the proposed program and its relation between the proposed program and existing degree programs. The educational objectives of the program must be clearly stated.

2. Statement of Need: This statement should provide evidence of sufficient student interest to justify implementation and continued support of the program. This section must also identify the targeted audience and contain the rationale based on educational requirements external to AFIT and the target audience. The rationale needs to include an estimate of student flow into AFIT.

3. Statement of Resources: The statement of resources should describe in detail the personnel and facilities needed for the operation of the program. This section should include present and projected needs in faculty, facilities, equipment, library holdings, distance learning resources and support, and space. If no resources are needed, this fact should be stated.

4. Description of the Curriculum: The description of the curriculum should detail the program requirements, including those for credit hours, research hours, and coursework. It should identify all courses in the program, their descriptions, their frequency of offering, and any proposed new courses. A rationale describing the curriculum in relation to the goals of the program should also be provided. Educational objectives must be defined and an assessment plan must be defined as well.

5. List of Faculty: The purpose of this section is to identify all teaching and research faculty participating in the G.C. program and their qualifications with respect to the body of knowledge associated with the G.C. program. It also conveys the involvement of the permanent faculty and adjunct faculty.

6. Admission Requirements: Admission standards must be clearly established for a G.C. program. Standards should closely reflect the same standards for degree programs with the exception of requiring Graduate Record Examination scores. Each department offering the G.C. shall establish the minimum grade point average, minimum Test of English as a Foreign Language score for international students, and requirements for standardized tests scores. Greater flexibility than that found in graduate admission requirements is intentionally built into graduate certificate programs so that the needs of the target student population may be met, as appropriate.
7. **Certificate Completion Requirements**: This subsection must clearly identify criteria for successfully completing the G.C. program including GPA requirements, time to completion, and exit examination requirements, if required. Please note: ALL graduate certificate program students must have achieved and must maintain a cumulative 3.0 (B) grade point average in all graduate certificate courses attempted in order for the graduate certificate to be granted.

8. **Endorsements**: All heads or curriculum chairs whose departments or programs are participating in the proposed certificate program must submit statements of endorsement. If two or more departments create a G.C. program, one department must be designated as the sponsoring department. Department Heads are responsible for acquiring letters of understanding or agreement between the sponsoring department and the supporting department or departments.

9. **Form 69 and Program Guide**: G.C. proposal packages will also include a completed Form 69 (Academic Program Summary) and a Program Guide. New programs will follow the CDRC approval chain as identified in the Form 69.
Request for Enrollment into a Certificate Degree Program

REQUEST FOR ENROLLMENT of CERTIFICATE

The purpose of this form is for current students who are assigned to AFIT to receive a Certificate in conjunction with their degree. The preferred method of routing this form is electronically, signatures of the student and faculty should be electronically with a Common Access Card. Once all signatures have been received submit this form to the AFIT Registrar for processing. The email address for the Registrar is registrar@afit.edu

To be completed by the student and submitted to the Instructor/advisor

Name (Last, First, Middle)  AFIT Student I.D. No.  Academic Program

Advisor Name  Student E-mail Address

☐ Data Science Certificate
☐ Human Systems (HSC)
☐ Test and Evaluation Certificate
☐ Systems Engineering (SEC)
☐ Space Systems Certificate
☐ Autonomy Certificate In Residence only
☐ Cost Capability Analysis Certificate Program Certificate In Residence only
☐ Nuclear Weapons Effects, Policy, and Proliferation Certificate Program (NWEPP)

Students' Signature

TO BE COMPLETED BY DIRECTOR, GRADUATE CERTIFICATE PROGRAM or RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT HEAD

☐ Approved  ☐ Disapproved

Justification for disapproval

Signature

Dec 2018
Attachment 3

Officially Recorded Graduate Certificate

AIR FORCE INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
Graduate School of Engineering and Management

ATTESTS THAT

<Student Name>

HAVING SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE PROGRAM
IS HEREBY AWARDED THE CERTIFICATE OF

<Program Name>

on this <day>th day of <Month>, <year>

__________________________________________
<Name>, PhD
Head, Department of <Name>

__________________________________________
<Name>
Dean, Graduate School of Engineering and Management