



SOUTH DAKOTA BOARD OF REGENTS
ACADEMIC AFFAIRS FORMS
New Certificate

Use this form to propose a certificate program at either the undergraduate or graduate level. A certificate program is a sequence, pattern, or group of academic credit courses that focus upon an area of specialized knowledge or information and develop a specific skill set. Certificate programs typically are a subset of the curriculum offered in degree programs, include previously approved courses, and involve 9-12 credit hours including prerequisites. In some cases, standards for licensure will state explicit requirements leading to certificate programs requiring more than 12 credit hours (in such cases, exceptions to course or credit requirements must be justified and approved). The Board of Regents, Executive Director, and/or their designees may request additional information about the proposal. After the university President approves the proposal, submit a signed copy to the Executive Director through the system Chief Academic Officer. Only post the New Certificate Form to the university website for review by other universities after approval by the Executive Director and Chief Academic Officer.

UNIVERSITY:	All BOR Schools
TITLE OF PROPOSED CERTIFICATE:	Essential Workforce Skills
INTENDED DATE OF IMPLEMENTATION:	Summer 2026
PROPOSED CIP CODE:	24.0102
UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT:	BHSU: DSU: NSU: 5A SDSMT: SDSU: USD: Arts and Sciences, General
BANNER DEPARTMENT CODE:	BHSU: BSMS DSU: DGES NSU: NHSS SDSMT: MHSS SDSU: SCAR USD: UASG
UNIVERSITY DIVISION:	BHSU: College of Liberal Arts DSU: College of Arts & Sciences NSU: College of Arts & Sciences SDSMT: College of Science & Letters SDSU: College of Arts, Humanities, & Social Sciences USD: College of Arts & Sciences
BANNER DIVISION CODE:	BHSU: 6A DSU: 8G NSU: 5A SDSMT: 4I SDSU: 3S USD: 2A

Please check this box to confirm that:

- The individual preparing this request has read AAC Guideline 2.3.2.2.C, which pertains to new certificate requests, and that this request meets the requirements outlined in the guidelines.
- This request will not be posted to the university website for review of the Academic Affairs Committee until it is approved by the Executive Director and Chief Academic Officer.

University Approval

To the Board of Regents and the Executive Director: I certify that I have read this proposal, that I believe it to be accurate, and that it has been evaluated and approved as provided by university policy.

Institutional Approval Signature <i>President or Chief Academic Officer of the University</i>	Date
Institutional Approval Signature <i>President or Chief Academic Officer of the University</i> <i>Erin Foubert</i>	Date 2/9/2026
Institutional Approval Signature <i>President or Chief Academic Officer of the University</i>	Date
Institutional Approval Signature <i>President or Chief Academic Officer of the University</i>	Date
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Note: In the responses below, references to external sources, including data sources, should be documented with a footnote (including web addresses where applicable).

1. Is this a graduate-level certificate or undergraduate-level certificate (place an “X” in the appropriate box)?

Undergraduate Certificate Graduate Certificate

2. What is the nature/ purpose of the proposed certificate? Please include a brief (1-2 sentence) description of the academic field in this certificate.

This certificate provides an opportunity to engage South Dakota high school students with a credential that allows them to take meaningful college courses that count toward a future degree while developing essential skills for career readiness (communication and problem solving). The certificate includes courses that are part of the foundational general education core and is, therefore, a stackable credential that applies toward any Associate or Bachelor’s degree. The Essential Workforce Skills certificate focuses on the development of communication, quantitative literacy, inquiry and analysis, and critical thinking skills. (<https://coloradomtn.edu/programs/essential-skills/>)

3. If you do not have a major in this field, explain how the proposed certificate relates to your university mission and strategic plan, and to the current Board of Regents Strategic Plan 2014-2020.

Links to the applicable State statute, Board Policy, and the Board of Regents Strategic Plan are listed below for each campus.

BHSU:	SDCL § 13-59	BOR Policy 1.2.1
DSU:	SDCL § 13-59	BOR Policy 1.2.2
NSU:	SDCL § 13-59	BOR Policy 1.2.3
SDSMT:	SDCL § 13-60	BOR Policy 1.2.4
SDSU:	SDCL § 13-58	BOR Policy 1.2.5
USD:	SDCL § 13-57	BOR Policy 1.2.6
	Board of Regents Strategic Plan	

This certificate is stackable with any Associate or Bachelor’s degree to meet general education requirements.

4. Provide a justification for the certificate program, including the potential benefits to students and potential workforce demand for those who graduate with the credential. For workforce related information, please provide data and examples. Data may include, but are not limited to the South Dakota Department of Labor, the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Regental system dashboards, etc. Please cite any sources in a footnote.

According to a report commissioned by the Department of Labor¹, some of the essential skills necessary for success in the workplace include writing, listening, speaking, mathematical reasoning, and problem solving. In addition, the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE)² has developed eight career readiness competencies, two of which are relevant to this certificate: Communication (“...demonstrate verbal, written, and non-verbal/body language, abilities”) and Critical Thinking (“make decisions and solve problems using sound, inclusive reasoning and judgement” and “gather and analyze information from a diverse set of sources and individuals to fully understand a problem” and “accurately summarize and interpret data...”).

The courses required in this certificate support students in developing the essential workforce skills of communication, critical thinking, and problem solving that employers seek, setting students up for success in the workplace. All four of the courses in the certificate satisfy general education requirements for any system associate or bachelor’s degree. Finally, creating a stackable certificate that bundles the most common dual credit courses into a credential provides an opportunity for all system dual credit students to visualize their pathway to any associate or bachelor’s degree in the system through access to internal tools that map courses to degree plans.

5. Who is the intended audience for the certificate program (including but not limited to the majors/degree programs from which students are expected)?

The intended audience is high school students pursuing higher education credits.

¹ [ACT, Inc., 2000. Workplace Essential Skills: Resources Related to the SCANS Competencies and Foundation Skills. A report commissioned by the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, and the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement.](#)

² [National Association of Colleges and Employers Career Readiness Competencies.](#)

6. Certificate Design

- A. **Is the certificate designed as a stand-alone education credential option for students not seeking additional credentials (i.e., a bachelor’s or master’s degree)? If so, what areas of high workforce demand or specialized body of knowledge will be addressed through this certificate?** No

- B. **Is the certificate a value added credential that supplements a student’s major field of study? If so, list the majors/programs from which students would most benefit from adding the certificate.** No

- C. **Is the certificate a stackable credential with credits that apply to a higher level credential (i.e., associate, bachelor’s, or master’s degree)? If so, indicate the program(s) to which the certificate stacks and the number of credits from the certificate that can be applied to the program.**

This certificate is stackable with all Associate or Bachelor’s degree programs meeting general education requirements for SGR 2, 5, and the Civics requirement of SGR 3, while partially fulfilling the general education requirement for SGR 1.

- 7. **List the courses required for completion of the certificate in the table below (if any new courses are proposed for the certificate, please attach the new course requests to this form). Certificate programs by design are limited in the number of credit hours required for completion. Certificate programs consist of nine (9) to twelve (12) credit hours, including prerequisite courses. In addition, certificates typically involve existing courses. If the curriculum consists of more than twelve (12) credit hours (including prerequisites) or includes new courses, please provide explanation and justification below.**

Prefix	Number	Course Title (add or delete rows as needed)	Prerequisites for Course Include credits for prerequisites in subtotal below.	Credit Hours	New (yes, no)
ENGL	101	Composition I	None	3	No
		Take one of the following			
CMST	101	Foundations of Communication	None	3	No
CMST	215	Public Speaking	None	3	No
CMST	222	Argumentation and Debate	None	3	No
		Take one of the following			
CIV	100	American Civics	None	3	No
HIST	151	United States History I	None	3	No
HIST	152	United States History II	None	3	No
POLS	100	American Government	None	3	No
POLS	210	State & Local Government	None	3	No
		Take one of the following			
Math	103 or Higher		Depends on course taken	3-4	No
Subtotal				12-13	

8. Student Outcome and Demonstration of Individual Achievement.

Board Policy 2:23 requires certificate programs to “have specifically defined student learning outcomes.

A. What specific knowledge and competencies, including technology competencies, will all students demonstrate before graduation? *The knowledge and competencies should be specific to the program and not routinely expected of all university graduates.*

- Students will write effectively and responsibly and will understand and interpret the written expression of others.
- Students will communicate effectively and responsibly through listening and speaking.
- Students will effectively communicate their viewpoints on political issues, engage in civil discourse, and critically analyze the impact of their participation in the democratic process.
- Students will understand and apply fundamental mathematical processes and reasoning.

B. Complete the table below to list specific learning outcomes – knowledge and competencies – for courses in the proposed program in each row. *Label each column heading with a course prefix and number. Indicate required courses with an asterisk (*). Indicate with an X in the corresponding table cell for any student outcomes that will be met by the courses included. All students should acquire the program knowledge and competencies regardless of the electives selected. Modify the table as necessary to provide the requested information for the proposed program.*

Individual Student Outcome (Same as in the text of the proposal)	Program Courses that Address the Outcomes			
	ENGL 101	CMST	CIV, HIST, POLS	MATH
Students will write effectively and responsibly and will understand and interpret the written expression of others.	X			
Students will communicate effectively and responsibly through listening and speaking.		X		
Students will effectively communicate their viewpoints on political issues, engage in civil discourse, and critically analyze the impact of their participation in the democratic process.			X	
Students will understand and apply fundamental mathematical processes and reasoning.				X

Modify the table as necessary to include all student outcomes. Outcomes in this table are to be the same ones identified in the text.

9. Delivery Location.

Note: The accreditation requirements of the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) require Board approval for a university to offer programs off-campus and through distance delivery.

A. Complete the following charts to indicate if the university seeks authorization to deliver the entire program on campus, at any off-campus location (e.g., USD - Sioux Falls, Black Hills State University - Rapid City, Capital City Campus, etc.) or deliver the entire program through distance technology (e.g., as an online program)?

	Yes/No	Intended Start Term
On campus	Yes	August 2026

	Yes/No	If Yes, list location(s)	Intended Start Term
Off campus	Yes	In-district where approved, USD-SF, and BHSU-RC, NSU-HCC	August 2026

	Yes/No	If Yes, identify delivery methods <i>Delivery methods are defined in AAC Guideline 2.4.3.B.</i>	Intended Start Term
Distance Delivery (online/other distance delivery methods)	Yes	X15/X18	August 2026
Does another BOR institution already have authorization to offer the program online?		If yes, identify institutions:	

B. Complete the following chart to indicate if the university seeks authorization to deliver more than 50% but less than 100% of the certificate through distance learning (e.g., as an on-line program)? This question responds to HLC definitions for distance delivery.

	Yes/No	If Yes, identify delivery methods	Intended Start Date
Distance Delivery (online/other distance delivery methods)			

10. Additional Information: *Additional information is optional. Use this space to provide pertinent information not requested above. Limit the number and length of additional attachments. Identify all attachments with capital letters. Letters of support are not necessary and are rarely included with Board materials. The University may include responses to questions from the Board or the Executive Director as appendices to the original proposal where applicable. Delete this item if not used.*