

Applied Research Methods Certificate

University of Delaware

Program Policy Statement

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Applied Research Methods Certificate University of Delaware Program Policy Statement

Table of Contents

PART I. PROGRAM HISTORY AND PURPOSE	3
PROGRAM PURPOSE	3
CURRENT STATUS	3
DEGREES OFFERED	3
TERM WHEN FIRST STUDENTS MAY ENROLL	4
DEMAND FOR THE PROGRAM	4
COLLEGE IN WHICH THE PROGRAM WILL RESIDE	5
PART II. ADMISSION	5
ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS	5
PRIOR DEGREE REQUIREMENTS	5
APPLICATION DEADLINES	6
SPECIAL COMPETENCIES NEEDED	6
ADMISSION CATEGORIES	6
OTHER DOCUMENTS REQUIRED	6
PART III. ACADEMIC (PRESENT ALL INFORMATION SEPARATELY FOR EACH DEGREE AND EACH CONCENTRATION, IF APPLICABLE)	6
CERTIFICATE REQUIREMENTS	6
MODE OF DELIVERY	6
INCLUSION IN OTHER PROGRAMS	7
VARIANCE IN DEGREE REQUIREMENTS	7
COMMITTEES FOR EXAMS, THESIS, OR DISSERTATIONS	7
TIMETABLE AND DEFINITION OF SATISFACTORY PROGRESS TOWARDS THE DEGREE	7
PART IV. ASSESSMENT PLAN	8
PART V. PROGRAM EDUCATIONAL GOALS	9
PART VI. FINANCIAL AID	9
FINANCIAL AWARDS	9
PART VII. DEPARTMENTAL OPERATIONS	9
GENERAL STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES	9

Applied Research Methods Certificate

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Program Policy Statement

Part I. Program History and Purpose

A. Program Purpose

The Applied Research Methods Certificate is a 12-credit program intended to prepare students in advanced research methods, primarily for the purposes of program and policy evaluation, but also for research studies and projects.

The University of Delaware Strategic Plan incorporates as a key activity that programs “rigorously challenge students to be excellent scholars, promote interdisciplinary thinking and collaborations, and meet the needs of students and society.” The proposed certificate directly addresses this priority by training scholars to conduct research that provides credible evidence about the efficiency and effectiveness of interventions, evidence that is used to inform decisions in the public, non-profit, and for-profit sectors.

This certificate serves a need for education in research methods and skills within Delaware, across our region, and beyond. A student who earns the Applied Research Methods Certificate will be able to:

1. Collect and analyze both quantitative and qualitative data;
2. Develop advanced knowledge in a quantitative and qualitative methodologies; and
3. Conduct a research study, including creating research questions, developing the research design, collecting and analyzing data, interpreting and reporting results, and disseminating and facilitating the use of findings.

B. Current Status

The certificate is in the proposal stage.

C. Degrees Offered

Certificate. The certificate awarded to those who complete the program of study will be an Applied Research Methods Certificate from the University of Delaware Graduate College. All courses will be offered online.

D. Term when First Students May Enroll

We anticipate that students may be able to enroll in certificate courses approximately one year following approval. During the year between approval and enrollment, the program will work to (1) create the program's administrative structure, (2) develop online courses for the program, (3) market the program, and (4) recruit its first group of students. Once the program has begun, students may apply to and enroll on a rolling basis.

E. Demand for the Program

This certificate is specifically intended to prepare students with the skills necessary to design and conduct research. Some students may be employed and looking to gain program research skills for their current position. Other students may be interested in securing jobs in research or evaluation.

A market research study conducted in June 2021 by the UD Division of Professional and Continuing Studies found high demand for new jobs in the evaluation research fields in the Mid-Atlantic region, with the highest in Virginia and New York. Further, the median salary for graduates with master's degrees was \$80,893 in the Mid-Atlantic Region. The education market was found to be not crowded, with the average cost of competitors' tuition being \$1,180 per credit. Most competing programs are offered on-campus, either full- or part-time; very few had online options.

Audience for the Program. It is anticipated that many of the students in the program will already have some experience as service providers or managers. In their work environments, they may discover the importance of evaluation and research methods for accountability and program improvement. This discovery may lead to the desire for increased knowledge about evaluation and research methods so that they can pursue careers in the field. It is also anticipated that organizations may want to partner to offer the program to a group of their employees.

Unique Career Paths. There are three likely career paths for graduates. First, graduates who are already employed may continue with their organization, now equipped with skills in research methods. Second, graduates may be recruited by regional firms that hire individuals with research methods skills, including American Institutes for Research (AIR; offices in Rockville, MD), Urban Institute (located in Washington, DC), Mathematica (offices in Washington, DC and Princeton, NJ), Research for Action (located in Philadelphia, PA), Westat (headquartered in Rockville, MD), and WestEd (offices in Washington, DC and New York, NY). A third path is finding researcher positions through sources such as the American Evaluation Association (AEA) or the American Educational Research Association (AERA).

F. College in which the Program will Reside

The program will reside in the Graduate College.

Part II. Admission

A. Admission Requirements

The admissions criteria will identify those applicants who are likely to be successful in the program. Specifically, the program seeks to attract applicants who have: (1) a demonstrated commitment to social change and betterment through effective research, and (2) an academic and/or professional background that indicates the ability to successfully complete the program. Acceptance to the program is based on a composite of the applicant's scholastic record, any standardized test scores, letters of reference, and personal statement. Relevant work experience may also be taken into consideration. Admission is selective and competitive based on the number of well-qualified applicants and the limits of available faculty and facilities. Note that Master of Science in Interdisciplinary Evaluation Science (MSES) students may not apply to the Applied Research Methods Certificate; instead, MSES students will receive the Research Methods Certificate.

University policy on admissions: Admission to the certificate program is competitive. Those who meet stated requirements are not guaranteed admission, nor are those who fail to meet all of those requirements necessarily precluded from admission if they offer other appropriate strengths.

Applicants for the Certificate in Applied Research Methods will apply to the Graduate College. The specific criteria for GPA and test scores are:

- Applicants should have an overall undergraduate Grade Point Average (GPA) of 3.0 or higher (on a scale of 4.0 = A), however all applications will be considered.
- If English is not an applicant's first language, then the applicant must demonstrate a satisfactory command of English. The TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) or TOEFL Essentials is required of all foreign applicants. If TOEFL scores are submitted, a minimum score of 600 (paper-based test), 250 (computer-based test), or 100 (TOEFL iBT) is required for consideration for admission. If TOEFL Essentials scores are submitted, a minimum score 10.5 is required for consideration for admission.

B. Prior Degree Requirements

Applicants must have a minimum of a baccalaureate degree. The discipline in

which the applicant received his or her degree is not necessarily a decisive factor in admissions.

C. Application Deadlines

Students may apply at any time; applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis.

D. Special Competencies Needed

None.

E. Admission Categories

Both part-time and full-time students will be admitted. Admissions and course requirements are the same for part- and full-time students.

F. Other Documents Required

- Applicants must submit a written statement of the reasons for their interest in research, their motivation to pursue a graduate degree, and their professional goals and objectives.
- Applicants must provide letters of recommendation from two (2) people familiar with the candidate's academic record and/or professional achievement.

Part III. Academic (present all information separately for each degree and each concentration, if applicable)

A. Certificate Requirements

The Applied Research Methods Certificate requires 12 credits. These 12 credits include the following three required 3-credit courses:

- EVAL 770: Quantitative methods and analysis
- EVAL 771: Qualitative methods and analysis
- EVAL 781: Mixed Methods Research

In addition, students will choose one elective from the following courses:

- EVAL 615: Research Design and Methods
- EVAL 680: Foundations of Evaluation
- EVAL 755: Evaluation Models and Management
- EVAL 780: Survey research
- Advisor-approved specialization course

B. Mode of Delivery

- All 4 courses will be offered 100% virtually.

C. Inclusion in other programs

None.

D. Variance in Degree Requirements

In rare circumstances, students may need to alter approved programs of study once they have entered the program for reasons such as scheduling conflicts or the creation of new courses directly related to the students’ goals. Students who wish to make changes to their program of study should first obtain permission from their advisor. The student must then make a written request to the Faculty Governance Committee to revise the program of study.

If students are involved in research projects involving human subjects, even administration of a survey, approval must be obtained prior to beginning any study. Information about obtaining approval may be found on Human Subjects in Research (<http://www.udel.edu/OVPR/humans/humans.html>). If a project involves animal subjects, an Animal Use Proposal must be completed and submitted to the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (<http://www.udel.edu/OVPR/animals/animals.html>).

E. Committees for Exams, Thesis, or Dissertations

This certificate does not have a culminating exam, thesis, or dissertation.

F. Timetable and Definition of Satisfactory Progress towards the Degree

We anticipate most students will be part-time; time to completion will vary by student. The program can be completed in 1 year of part-time study (6-credit hours/semester for 2 semesters (depending upon course offerings, the elective course may also be taken during a winter or summer session). Though, students may take three to four years for program completion. There are no full-time residency requirements.

Table 3. *Course Sequencing (Part-Time)*

Session	Course	Format
Semester 1	EVAL 770: Quantitative methods and analysis EVAL 771: Qualitative methods and analysis	Two 7 week courses
Semester 2	EVAL 781: Mixed Methods Research Elective Choice	Two 7 week courses

Students will be assigned an advisor upon entering the program. At the midpoint in a student’s program, the advisor will review the student’s program of study to

determine if he or she is making satisfactory progress through the program. Students who are not making satisfactory progress will be placed on academic probation for one semester. If performance has not improved by the end of the probation semester, the student may be terminated from the program. A minimum average of B (GPA of 3.0) is required for successful completion of the program.

Students must have a minimum overall grade point average of 3.0 to be eligible for the certificate. Candidates should see that all final grades have been submitted by their instructors.

If a student should be recommended for termination for failure to make satisfactory progress, they may follow the grievance procedures for the Graduate College.

Part IV. Assessment Plan

The program will be assessed in two ways:

- Program-level outcomes; and
- Student-level outcomes.

Table 6. *Program-level Outcomes and How They Will Be Assessed*

Program-level Outcomes	Measure 1	Measure 2
Interdisciplinary faculty	Data on faculty involvement	Survey*
Recruitment of excellent, diverse students (excellence will be examined by admissions achievement indicators, essays, and recommendation information; diversity will be examined by gender, race, ethnicity, as well as other demographic variables)	Application and admissions data	Survey*
*Survey: at the end of each academic year, for the first 3 years of the program, we will survey faculty to ask about their experiences participating in the program and recruiting students to identify areas in need of additional supports.		

Table 7. *Student Outcomes and How They Will Be Assessed*

Student Outcomes	Measure 1	Measure 2
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Research Design Skills	Final course paper, project or exam	Graduate Follow-Up Survey
Quantitative and Qualitative Analytic Skills	Final course paper, project or exam	Graduate Follow-Up Survey
Post-graduation professional success/career advancement	Exit Survey	Graduate Follow-Up Survey

Part V. Program Educational Goals

By the end of the program, graduates will have met the following program educational goals:

- Collect and analyze both quantitative and qualitative data;
- Develop advanced knowledge in a quantitative and qualitative methodologies; and
- Conduct a research study, including creating research questions, developing the research design, collecting and analyzing data, interpreting and reporting results, and disseminating and facilitating the use of findings.

Part VI. Financial Aid

A. Financial Awards

Financial assistance from the program is not provided for Certificate students, however students may find financial assistance from external sources. We intend this to be a revenue-generating program where students will pay the cost of tuition.

Part VII. Departmental Operations

A. General Student Responsibilities

Students are expected to notify program administrative staff of any change in address. Students will be expected to have access to a personal computer and the Internet for on-line coursework. There are no other required expenses beyond the traditional books and supplies.