

Graduate Business Certificates – FAQ's for PMBAs

What is a Graduate Business Certificate?

A certificate is a way to add a specialization or area of concentration to your PMBA degree.

We currently offer the following certificates:

- Accounting
- Business Analytics
- Finance
- Global Business
- Innovation and Entrepreneurship
- Leadership Formation
- Marketing
- Risk Advisory and Assurance

Why would I want to add a certificate to my degree?

The certificate program allows students to:

- specialize in new areas of business
- update older information
- acquire added skills and credentials to increase career opportunities

Do I receive a physical certificate when I'm finished?

Yes. Upon completion of the requirements of the certificate, students will have posted to their transcripts the entry, "Certificate of (insert discipline)" and be issued a certificate listing the discipline studied.

Do I need to take additional credits beyond my degree to complete a certificate?

Generally, the answer is no. It does depend upon how far along you are in your program, how many classes you've already taken, which classes you have taken, what certificate you want to add, and how many certificates you want to add. Most of the classes you will take for the certificate will double-count as electives for your PMBA degree. So, if you have elective space still available, you shouldn't need to take additional credits.

Does adding a certificate cost additional money?

No. Not if you utilize the electives you already have within your program. If you need additional classes (as mentioned above) then you will have to pay for those, but the certificate itself requires no additional cost.

Can I add more than one certificate?

Yes. Technically you can add as many as you'd like. However, you will want to consider whether you want to pay for additional classes beyond what's already required for your degree. If not, you might be limited to one or two, depending on the certificate and how many electives you still have available.

How do I add a certificate? Do I Need to apply?

If you are already enrolled in the PMBA program and you want to add a certificate, all you need to do is fill out an "Add a Major, Degree, Specialization, or Certificate" form and bring the form to your academic advisor to complete the process. No "application" is required. You just sign up, and the certificate is officially added to your degree. You need one form for each certificate you want to add.

When should I add a certificate to my degree?

We recommend adding the certificate to your degree as soon as you know you'd like to complete it. This will help the administration with scheduling - specifically knowing which classes we really need to offer and how often. Officially, you can add a certificate to your degree up until the last quarter before you graduate. But once you graduate, you can't retroactively add it- so plan ahead.

Can I graduate from my degree, and then finish the certificate?

No, not if your certificate relies upon any of the classes you have utilized to complete your degree. For example, if you finish all PMBA requirements, and all 54 credits, but you still need an extra class to finish your certificate, and you go ahead and officially graduate, those classes are now "wrapped up" in the degree and can no longer be counted separately for a certificate. You would need to complete all 15 credits again to complete the certificate. Summary: DON'T graduate until your certificate is finished, too!

What if I decide to drop it? Or I don't want to finish the remaining classes?

If you change your mind, dropping a certificate is easy. Simply fill out a "Drop Additional Major, Minor, Degree, or Specialization" form and return it to your advisor. Please complete this step before you graduate if you don't want an incomplete certificate showing on your transcript.

What if I already took an elective before I added the cert – will it still count?

Yes. Any SU classes that you have taken as part of your current PMBA will count towards your certificate even if you haven't yet added the certificate to your program. As long as the class isn't counting towards a different degree/certificate you have already graduated from, you should be okay.

How do I know what classes to take?

There are a couple of different places to find this information. 1) Ask your advisor to send you the schedule of classes for the certificate you are interested in. 2) You can look on our SU/Grad Programs website for details about each certificate including required classes. The schedule is also linked there, but it's a little tricky to find.

Once you locate a schedule, you will be able to see how many required/elective courses you need to complete, if there are any prerequisites for those classes (which will also give you an idea if they need to be completed in a certain order), as well as when those classes will be offered over the coming year. If you have specific questions about which classes you want, or when something will be offered, you can always reach out to your advisor.

How do I schedule those classes?

Same way you schedule out the rest of your program. Grab a scheduling template of your choosing, then start mapping out classes. I like to start with the required classes and then add in the electives based on preferred order. Depending on your interest, and when things are offered, you might need to be flexible. If you are doing more than one certificate, this can be especially tricky. Keep in mind that you may not get everything you want within your desired timeline – it's good to have a backup plan.

What if a class I need isn't offered (when I need it)?

If it's an elective, think about whether a different elective on the list would work. If it is a required class, talk to your advisor about your specific situation and see if there is anything that can be substituted or adjusted to help make it work – sometimes we have some flexibility, sometimes we don't.

I am interested in two certificates that list some of the same electives – can these classes count for both certificates?

Yes. You can have 6 credits (or two classes) that overlap between the two certificates, but you need to have 9 credits of unique coursework for each certificate.

I saw a class listed on the certificate schedule that normally counts as my “capstone” instead of as an elective for my PMBA – how does that work with the certificate?

There are a couple of instances when classes listed as options for the Strategy & Synthesis (capstone) requirement for your degree, are also classes listed as required/electives for a certificate. In this situation, the class will count for both the capstone requirement and towards the certificate. An additional perk with this, is that the rest of the certificate will only use up four of your PMBA electives instead of five, so you can take additional electives (or consider a second certificate).

If I just take the required classes, but don't submit any paperwork does that mean I have added a certificate?

No. You must officially add the certificate to your degree to have it count. Just taking the classes doesn't do it.

How do I know if I added a certificate or if it's been processed?

When you log into SU Online or My.SeattleU & Student Planning, and look at your program evaluation, you will see the certificate listed. If it's not there, it hasn't been added. If you just submitted your paperwork, it takes a few weeks to be processed, so give it some time to catch up.

Do I have to add a certificate to my PMBA degree?

No. Adding a certificate is completely optional.

Who should I contact if I still have questions?

Talk to your advisor about any additional questions, scheduling problems, or other concerns you might have.
