Chapter 4

LEVEL II: CERTIFICATE OF RECOGNITION

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A. Role of the Certificate of Recognition (COR)

The School of Graduate Studies and Research (SGSR) will issue a Certificate of Recognition (COR) to a graduate student who successfully completes a short sequence of courses or studies apart from a degree program. Students admitted under a Certificate of Recognition admission category will complete between 12 and 18 credits from a curriculum-approved, prescribed set of courses, which constitute the COR (see Guidelines below). A COR typically will be designed for students who do not intend to pursue graduate degrees. The COR results in a certificate indicating the completion of a sequence of specialized courses, and it can be cited on a student's résumé. A COR is meant to be completed in less time and at less expense than a graduate degree.

A COR is consistent with the IUP Mission Statement of the master's and specialist/certificate levels, "to sustain and to develop programs of similarly high quality (to the doctoral programs) while, in general, emphasizing more applicable professional skills." The title "Certificate of Recognition" is consistent with the wording in the PASSHE Board of Governors Policy 1985-01, Requirements for Initiation or Change of Credit-Based Academic Programs, and of Academic Units. The guidelines below were developed in conjunction with the guidelines published by the Council of Graduate Schools (CGS), which states that the graduate certificate is "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."[1]

A COR proposal must demonstrate that the COR: (a) gives the student a useful and substantial base of knowledge at the graduate level; (b) enhances students' credentials with employers locally, nationally, and internationally; (c) represents a clearly defined level of education in the area of specialty; and (d) promotes the reputation of graduate education at IUP.

[1] W. Patterson, Dean-in-Residence, Council of Graduate Schools, "Analyzing Policies and Procedures for Graduate Certificate Programs", 1999. www.cgsnet.org/PublicationsPolicyRes/index.htm.

B. Guidelines for Developing a Graduate COR

In keeping with the IUP Mission Statement for Graduate Education and the guidelines of the Council of Graduate Schools, and to ensure the quality, relevance, and marketability of the graduate COR, the Graduate Committee has established the following guidelines for departments wishing to develop a COR:

1. Credits: A COR contains a minimum of 12 credits and a maximum of 18 credits, of which at least 50% must be at the 600 level or higher.
2. Electives: All COR electives must be consistent with the purpose of the COR, and a rationale must be provided for their inclusion as permissible courses. Therefore, not all courses included in another graduate offering would be appropriate as COR electives. Given that a COR is to be well-defined, special topics courses to a maximum of 3 credits may be applied toward a COR.
3. Relationship to graduate degree programs: A COR is a unique entity, targeting a different audience from that of existing graduate degree programs. Although a COR may contain courses required for an existing graduate degree as well as existing electives, a COR proposal must demonstrate that these courses can justifiably stand alone and be completed in a satisfactory manner by students not enrolled in the degree program. All credits may be transferred between a COR and a graduate degree program at the recommendation of the program and approval of the School of Graduate Studies and Research. In addition to those established by the SGSR, COR admission standards are determined by the department(s) offering the COR and should be unique to that COR. A COR student choosing later to pursue a graduate degree will have to submit a full application to the SGSR for admission to the graduate degree program.
4. Support of professional organizations: A COR proposal will be strengthened by adherence to written standards of professional organizations providing accreditation in related fields and, especially, by a specific statement of support from such an organization.
5. Interdisciplinary COR: An interdisciplinary COR will consist normally of courses that are offered by two or more departments. Faculty coordinating an interdisciplinary COR may be from a department that does not offer any graduate degrees. Proposers of an interdisciplinary COR are encouraged to balance course offerings from the departments involved. Interinstitutional CORs may be proposed following the additional guidelines in the Variability in Delivery Policy detailed in the Graduate Handbook (Chapter 7).
6. Distance Education: New courses for a COR must go through the regular approval process and

then through the Distance Education Approval process. Existing courses seeking distance education approval must go through the expedited approval process described in Chapter 14 of this Handbook.

C. Admission and Status of Students in a Graduate COR

1. Criteria for Admission: Applicants apply for Certificate of Recognition admission and must meet all of the Admission Requirements as given in the current IUP Graduate Catalogue.
2. Process for Admission: Applicants complete a SGSR application form, pay the nonrefundable application fee, and submit official transcripts from all postsecondary institutions attended. The SGSR will send the completed application to the department offering the COR and, upon the recommendation of that department, issue to the applicant a letter of admission that also assigns a departmental advisor.
3. Student Status: A student admitted to a COR will have Certificate of Recognition status. This is a non-degree status; consequently, a student with this status is not eligible for financial aid or assistantships. A student with Certificate of Recognition status who wishes later to pursue a graduate degree at IUP will have to apply for admission to a degree program.
4. Transfer Credits: All credits may be transferred between a COR and a graduate degree program at the recommendation of the program and approval of the School of Graduate Studies and Research, and these transfer credits must otherwise adhere to existing SGSR transfer credit policy. Transfer credits from other institutions are not permitted, unless the COR is part of an inter-institutional cooperative program. For inter-institutional programs, see also the "Variability in Delivery" chapter in the Graduate Handbook (Chapter 7).
5. Academic Standing: A student admitted to a COR must maintain academic good standing, defined as a 3.0 GPA (unless a higher GPA is required by the admitting department).
6. Completion of COR: A student must complete his/her COR studies within the timeframe and parameters established by the COR. The COR may be awarded at departmental ceremonies, but that decision is left to the discretion of the awarding department.
7. Transcripts: The completion of an approved COR will be noted on a student's transcript.
8. Other: Other existing SGSR policies and procedures govern COR students.

D. COR Proposal Format and Content

A proposal for a new COR or revisions to an existing COR must follow a Level II Program Proposal. The format below has been tailored specifically to CORs. Other Level II proposals should use the format given in Chapter 3.

1. Graduate Curriculum Authorization Form (Appendix D)

Indicate the type of submission. This page becomes the cover sheet of your proposal. Each change within the proposal, such as new course proposals, course revisions, and course deletions, will require a separate Authorization Form.

2. Introduction

Provide a short introduction, including definitions of key concepts or terms, a summary of the COR, and a brief rationale.

3. Appropriateness to Mission

State clearly the goals and objectives of the proposed program/revision and indicate how these goals and objectives advance the missions of PASSHE and IUP. (See Appendix B for copies of these mission statements.)

4. Need and Impact

   a. Provide evidence that:
      i) Demand for this COR exists. For example, cite an assessment of employer/employee needs or other sources and include a bibliography. A more detailed description of the needs assessment and its results can be appended to the proposal.
      ii) Students who complete the COR can enhance their career opportunities in a national or regional market.
   b. Assess the impact of this COR on existing graduate degree programs or other CORs.

5. Academic Integrity

Demonstrate the adequacy of the COR, how it relates to any professional or accrediting standards (even if accreditation will not be pursued or already exists), and the quality of the instructional staff. Include:

   a. An outline of the COR requirements, including credit requirements, core courses and electives, and any additional requirement(s) (e.g., internships, portfolio projects). Indicate which courses, if any, have prerequisites. Include course descriptions and discuss how each course is relevant/important to the educational objectives of the COR.

b. An example of how a student would progress through the COR (e.g., first semester courses, etc.). Specify the catalog term. The needs of both part-time and full-time students should be addressed. Include a time limit for completion of the COR.

c. Individual proposals for each new graduate course or course revision. (See Chapter 10 for new course proposals and major course revisions or Chapter 11 for minor course revisions.) The inclusion of each course within the COR should be justified.

d. A list of faculty to be involved in the proposed COR and the nature and level of their proposed involvement (teaching, advising students, etc.). Identify the faculty member who will be designated as the coordinator of the COR. Please remember that all faculty must be eligible to teach at the graduate level. To describe the nature and level of his/her proposed involvement (teaching, advising students, etc.), please have the participating faculty complete the Faculty Summary Sheet (Chapter 2, Section D.1).

e. An explanation of why the proposed new or revised COR is substantially different from or similar to existing CORs or graduate degree programs at IUP and the extent, if any, to which the proposed curriculum overlaps that of existing degree programs or other CORs. Although a COR may contain courses required for an existing graduate degree as well as existing electives, a COR proposal must demonstrate that these courses can justifiably stand alone and be completed in a satisfactory manner by students not enrolled in the degree program.

f. Letters of notification to and response(s) from each department potentially affected by the COR. These letters should verify that the information has been relayed to their departments and provide such comments that make clear each department's position. If a department is unresponsive, please include copies of at least two notification attempts.

g. A statement of CBA compliance. Please state that, to the best of your knowledge, the COR is in compliance with the current CBA. CORs found to be in violation of the CBA, even after formal approval, will require the prompt submission of a new proposal containing the necessary modifications. Typical issues of concern are faculty workload, dependence on temporary faculty, and sufficiency of resources.

6. Coordination with Programs at Other Institutions—Omit, unless relevant.

7. Periodic Assessment

Since CORs are meant to address the needs of the marketplace, proposers will be asked to put an expiry date on their COR. In no case may a COR exist for more than five years without an application for extension. In the year leading up to expiration, proposers may apply for an extension by completing an Authorization Form (Appendix D), attaching a narrative assessing their COR and

student learning outcomes, and demonstrating continued need and demand. In addition to an expiry date, please:

i) Describe what constitutes student learning for the COR. These outcomes may be stated as goals and objectives.

ii) Describe the methodology(ies) to be used for assessing whether or not student learning has been achieved.

See Appendix C for the current PASSHE statements on the topic of outcomes assessment.

8. Resource Sufficiency

Proposers must ensure that the proposing department has sufficient resources to offer the COR without draining resources from existing graduate degree programs.

a. If the COR requires an increase in departmental offerings, describe a strategy for the distribution of faculty workload that includes integration with undergraduate teaching responsibilities, if applicable. Utilize workload tables to summarize these data (see Chapter 2, Section D.2).

b. Detail the need for and availability of resources necessary to support the COR during the initial start-up year and for a subsequent three-year period. Show how the department will obtain required resources (i.e., new allocations or reallocations of existing resources), including:

i) Learning resources (books, periodicals, films, cassettes, etc.),

ii) Instructional equipment (including equipment maintenance) and supplies, and

iii) Facilities or facility modifications.

Provide letters of notification to and response from the University Library and, if relevant, the Instructional Design Center regarding adequacy of resources. If no response is received, please include copies of at least two notification attempts.

c. Summarize the information in 8.a and 8.b above in the budget table (see Chapter 2, Section D.3)

9. Impact on Educational Opportunity

The proposal must provide appropriate information regarding the probable impact of the new or revised COR on PASSHE and IUP goals for enhancing educational opportunity and assurance of civil rights.

a. Provide a plan to recruit and retain students from underrepresented groups (e.g., ethnic minorities, women) through completion of the COR.

b. Description of faculty composition - Omit.

c. Explain plans for inclusion in the curriculum of scholarship from under-represented groups.

10. Catalog Description

On a separate page attach a COR description suitable for inclusion in the Graduate Catalog. This description must include 1) COR objectives, 2) admission prerequisites, and 3) COR requirements.

11. Senate

After notification of approval by the Graduate Committee, please submit to the recording secretary of the Graduate Committee:

a. Three hard copies of the fully revised COR proposal
b. Three hard copies of the Senate agenda item (see below)
c. One electronic copy of both the fully revised proposal and the Senate agenda item.

The Senate agenda item should include: (1) the title of the COR, the sponsoring department(s) and a catalog start term; (2) a brief description of and rationale for the COR; (3) the catalog description from Section C.10; and (4) brief summaries of each major change (new courses, course deletions, etc.). The hard and electronic copies must be submitted to the recording secretary of the Graduate Committee no later than 14 days before the next Senate meeting.