15 FAQs about the ODU Humanities program Graduate Certificates

Q1. What is the overarching goal of these Certificates?

A1. Each certificate is designed to equip students with practical tools needed to complement their critical investment in the arts, health & wellness, or social justice-based causes. These tools are essential for setting students up for sustainable careers and/or leadership roles in these areas. Moreover, borrowing principles from Entrepreneurship Education, students enrolled in these certificates are learning how to develop innovative solutions to societal problems in and through these areas and how to cultivate stakeholders who will invest in these interventions.

Students in the Arts & Entrepreneurship certificate learn about necessary financial, organizational, marketing and administrative skills necessary for careers in the arts as well as how to envision and enact arts-based interventions at both the community and societal levels.

Students in the Health, Communication & Culture certificate learn about intercultural, interpersonal and mediated communication skills needed to engage diverse populations as well as the significance of socio-cultural and political-economic factors in shaping patient care and community responsiveness (including access) to health and wellness programs. Students are taught how to develop health & wellness-based interventions that address cultural differences and unequal access to information and resources.

Students in the Social Justice & Entrepreneurship certificate learn financial, organizational, administrative, and communication skills necessary for careers in community organizing, activism, and non-profit social justice fields as well as how to envision and enact social justice-based interventions at both the community and societal levels.

Q2. Do I need to be enrolled in the Humanities Masters’ degree program to pursue a certificate?

A2. No, the certificates are open to any student in any graduate program at ODU (MA, MFA, MPA, MEd, PhD, etc.) as well as to non-degree seeking students (though we would be very happy to discuss how you might pair it with our MA program).

Q3. Do I need to be enrolled in a graduate program at ODU to pursue a certificate?

A3. No, you can earn the certificate as a non-degree seeking student. Should you choose to pursue a graduate degree at a later date (within six years of certificate coursework) some or all of the credits for the certificate might be applied toward your degree (depending on the program you apply to).

Q4. Do I need to have completed my undergraduate degree to pursue a certificate?

A4. No, you can pursue the certificate if you are an undergraduate enrolled in a Linked BA/BS-MA program or a Senior in good standing seeking to take graduate classes to fill out their degree.

Seniors in good standing have a GPA of 3.3 or better. Seniors in good standing can take up to 12 graduate credit hours while completing their degree. Though not an official option, because
of their interdisciplinary design, in many cases certificates can also count in lieu of Option D for undergraduates.

Linked program students who are seeking a head start on their MA degree may also take 12 graduate credit hours before earning their undergraduate degree, six of which will also count toward their eventual MA in the Humanities. If you are pursuing a Linked program with another ODU graduate program, please consult with their GPD about courses that will count toward that eventual graduate degree.

All students must maintain a GPA of 3.5 or better in Certificate classes to earn the certificate.

**Q5. Do I need to be planning on attending graduate school to earn a certificate?**

A5. No, see previous answer about Seniors in good standing as well as A2 about enrolling as a non-degree seeking student. In short, you can enroll in the certificate programs as a graduating senior or as a College undergraduate degree holder without any intention of pursuing a graduate degree. The Certificates will still be graduate certificates since students are enrolled in graduate classes.

**Q6. Do I need to declare my intention to complete a certificate before I enroll in classes?**

A6. No, you can declare your intention to earn the certificate at any time prior to enrolling in the 1-credit Capstone class that serves as the culminating course for all Certificates. Non-degree seeking students can take most certificate courses without requiring permissions. Undergraduate students will need permission to take graduate-level courses but still do not need to declare their intent to complete a Certificate until their final semester.

**Q7. I see that some Certificate classes have undergraduate sections. Can I enroll in one of them and still earn the Certificate?**

A7. No, you must be enrolled in the graduate sections of those classes to earn a Certificate. There are additional work expectations in the graduate sections.

**Q8. I have already taken one or more classes that are required for a Certificate before learning of the program. Can those classes count?**

A8. Yes, classes can retroactively be counted so long as A) you have not yet graduated with your degree and B) you received a final grade of B+ or better in those courses.

**Q9. Am I limited to taking only the courses listed as core classes for a Certificate?**

A9. No, we accept substitutions when they make sense for a student’s goals and when classes are offered that might provide a more specialized focus on a topic. Every semester, we produce a list of classes offered that can count toward the Certificates.

**Q10. I already work for an organization and would like to develop my Capstone intervention in conjunction with them. May I do so?**
A10. Absolutely. The Certificates are designed to offer entrepreneurial problem-solving tools that should be developed for and with existing organizations and/or community needs in mind.

Q11. I don’t have a current relationship with a community stakeholder. How will one be identified for my Capstone?

A11. One of the requirements of completing the Capstone is that students hone their networking and outreach skills to cultivate relationships with stakeholders who might support your intervention proposal. You will work closely with the Certificate coordinator to identify those stakeholders and develop an outreach strategy to engage them.

Q12. How does the Capstone work and why is it set up the way it is?

A12. The Capstone culminates the Certificate. Students are required to develop a proposal for an intervention (whether in the arts, the health & wellness fields, or social justice will depend on the Certificate they are pursuing). This can be done either in partnership with an existing organization or as an independent proposal. Students will then be expected to pitch their proposal to local and regional stakeholders at an end-of-semester event held at ODU. Stakeholders can include partner organizations, funding agencies, advocacy groups, or local businesses and non-profits. Stakeholders will be identified in conjunction with students each semester to best conform to the proposals being developed. While we do not guarantee that stakeholders will invest in your intervention, we do promise real world feedback from peoples in position to support these initiatives with whom students can build relationships that might help them with their future career ambitions.

Q13. Can a Certificate be completed in a single semester?

A13. Currently, no. Certificates are designed to be completed in as few as two semesters and as many as six years (this is when according to the State of Virginia graduate credits expire).

Q14. Can I enroll in more than one certificate?

A14. Yes, you can enroll in all three certificates should you so desire. As there is some overlap among all three certificates in terms of course requirements, it may be possible to earn more than one certificate without having to take the maximum number of courses for each one.

Q15. How much does a certificate cost?

A15. Certificates cost the going tuition rate for graduate credits at ODU, which is currently $478/credit hour. Certificates are 13 credit hours. Students pay per class not upfront. This total does not include costs for books or other materials needed for individual classes.