

## **Certificate Programs: General Information**

### **How do I enroll and when do my classes start?**

The enrollment process for certificate programs starts in the Office of Extended Learning. We can answer some general questions, take down the necessary contact information, and provide you with some of the paperwork needed to get you started. If needed, we will also connect you with the faculty member assigned to your certificate.

Credit-bearing certificates start in the fall, spring or summer and are subject to the college's schedule, as well as policies and procedures.

Non-credit certificates are more flexible in their delivery. They are based on interest. They are assigned expected starting dates, but these dates are subject to change based on enrollment. All non-credit bearing certificates have a required minimum number of students to run. These certificates usually kick-off with an open house where students are given the opportunity to talk with the faculty to have questions answered. Students complete all the needed paperwork and if the minimum number of students is reached, classes start as originally proposed. Start dates may be delayed to accommodate the application process, and then the schedule will be modified.

### **What is the difference between a credit-bearing certificate program and a non-credit bearing?**

Credit-bearing means the student will receive college credit for the courses they take for their certificate. Courses will appear on a transcript from SUNY Cobleskill and may be used to further the student's education, should they wish to enroll in a degree program. Students will pay tuition and become a non-matriculated student of SUNY Cobleskill. They receive the benefits of a SUNY student – they may get a college ID, parking sticker etc. They may also be eligible for financial aid. Credit-bearing certificates are subject to the college's calendar and offerings. Courses are offered on a semester-basis, and courses must be taken when they are offered. If a certificate program is popular, and the minimum number of students needed to run a program is achieved, the Office of Extended Learning would pursue offering the classes needed for the certificate during the evening, or on Saturdays.

Non-credit bearing means students receive professional training or a set of skills. Non-credit bearing certificates are designed for working adults seeking professional education and development. Students are not looking to obtain a college credit or pursue a college degree, but rather train for a new career.

Students are not eligible for financial aid but may apply for low interest career training loans from Sallie Mae. Students may also seek funding assistance from local employment resources such as the Department of Labor's local One-Stop Career Centers.

For example, our Meat Processing and Food Safety Certificate is a month-long non-credit training providing participants with the skills needed to work or own their own USDA-approved meat processing facility. They may also be employed as butchers in stores or restaurants.

### **How long will it take to complete my certificate?**

The time it takes to complete a certificate depends on the certificate. Credit bearing certificates will usually take the longest to complete because they are subject to the college calendar and course availability. Non-credit certificates are designed with working adults in mind. Many can be completed in a short time so the student may continue to work while they train. The goal is to have the student able to enter the workforce, shortly after training. For example: We have a 4-week intensive computer training certificate program – two weeks in classroom instruction and two weeks on-the-job training, but we also have a hospital-based coding certificate that will take over 50 weeks to complete.

### **Is funding available?**

Credit-bearing certificates may be eligible for financial aid. Students interested in talking with our financial aid staff can contact us at 255-5528 to schedule an appointment.

Non-credit bearing career training certificate programs are not eligible for financial aid from the college. Some financial support may be available from your local Workforce Solutions Center/One-Stop Career Center. Visit your local office to discuss financial assistance. Please note: Medical Transcription is not eligible for assistance from the local career centers. Students may be eligible for career training loans. Interest rates vary depending upon your credit standing. Payments may be distributed over many years. For more information, please visit [www.salliemae.com](http://www.salliemae.com).

Installment payment plans are available through the Office of Extended Learning. You may pay in full, or distribute your payments out at no additional cost. A \$50 non-refundable registration fee will be assessed at the time of registration. Please note: no refunds will be given if you do not complete your training.