

## PROPOSAL FOR A CERTIFICATE PROGRAM

**Date:** 30 Jan 2026

**School/College/Unit:** Franklin College

**Department/Division:** Institute for Women's and Gender Studies

**Certificate Title:** Gender-Informed Professional Practice

**Effective Term:** Spring 2027

**Which campus(es) will offer this certificate?** UGA (Athens)

**Level (Undergraduate, Graduate, or Post-Baccalaureate):** Graduate

### **Program Abstract:**

This Certificate in Gender-Informed Professional Practice is designed for graduate students pursuing terminal master's and professional degrees. The certificate will provide students with a background in women's and gender studies and an orientation toward implementing these insights in practice-oriented fields such as social work, public health, and public administration. The existing 6-course graduate certificate in women's and gender studies is oriented toward PhD students and is often inaccessible to students pursuing terminal master's or professional degrees because they do not have room for it in their schedules. The Certificate in Gender-Informed Professional Practice, in contrast, will be a shorter certificate – four courses – and designed specifically for students going into practice-oriented fields. It will be administered by the Institute for Women's and Gender Studies.

Faculty proposing certificates offered by one academic unit should complete page 2.

Faculty proposing certificates offered by multiple academic units should complete pages 4-6.

After approval by school/college/unit, proposals for undergraduate programs should be sent to the Office of Curriculum Systems ([currsys@uga.edu](mailto:currsys@uga.edu)). Proposals for graduate programs should be sent to the Graduate School ([gradassociatedean@uga.edu](mailto:gradassociatedean@uga.edu))

## **Certificates Offered By One Academic Unit**

### **1. Purpose and Educational Objectives**

State the purpose and educational objectives of the program. How does this program complement the mission of the institution?

This Certificate in Gender-Informed Professional Practice is designed to provide graduate students pursuing terminal master's and professional degrees with a background in women's and gender studies and an orientation toward implementing these insights in practice-oriented fields such as social work, public health, nutrition, family therapy, education, community development, nonprofit management, and public administration. Practitioners in these fields often work on issues, either directly or peripherally, related to gender, sexuality, and intersectionality. This certificate will provide a basic education in women's and gender studies for practitioners, anchored around a required graduate-level introductory course, while also allowing students to tailor their elective coursework to their areas of interest/intended expertise, such as health, violence, the workplace, or sexualities. This proposed certificate will prepare future practitioners to better recognize and respond to how gender and its intersections with other social structures shape human experience and social institutions. It will equip participants with the capacity to design and deliver programs, policies, and services for people of all genders across diverse contexts.

Designed specifically for students going into practice-oriented fields, the certificate will be administered by the Institute for Women's and Gender Studies, the mission of which is to critically examine issues of gender, race, class, and sexuality. This certificate is interdisciplinary in content, and it is open to all graduate students.

### **2. Need for the Program**

The existing 6-course graduate certificate in women's and gender studies is oriented toward PhD students and is often inaccessible to students pursuing terminal master's or professional degrees because they do not have room for it in their schedules. The Certificate in Gender-Informed Professional Practice, in contrast, will be a shorter certificate and highly tailorable to students' specific practice-oriented interests.

Our assessment of the need for the program is rooted in master's level students, particularly in social work and public health but in other fields as well, who have noted the relevance of training in women's and gender studies in their fields but have also expressed the impossibility of completing our existing certificate given the short time frame and curricular demands of their

training programs. Affiliates in these units have also noted the need for more exposure to women's and gender studies among their students.

This certificate will increase enrollment in courses in Women's and Gender Studies and encourage interdisciplinary linkages between our Institute and practice-oriented fields. Students pursuing this certificate will receive a formal credential signaling their readiness to face the needs of the larger community.

The certificate is targeted at students who are already enrolled in professional Master's programs at UGA. The certificate will enhance these students' ability to secure employment and pursue a successful career in their chosen field by enhancing their key skills in these growing professional fields. For example, O\*NET reports that the career group of social and community service managers is expected to grow faster than average, with 5-6% projected growth from 2024-2034, and that careers in public health, such as occupational health and safety specialists, are expected to grow much faster than average, with a 7% projected growth from 2024-2034.<sup>1</sup> These career fields are especially looking to recruit candidates with key skills such as active listening, complex problem solving, and problem sensitivity (that is, the ability to recognize when there is a problem). The certificate will provide students with these and related key skills through examination of common gendered experiences in these professional areas.

In addition, provide the following information:

- a. Semester/Year of Program Initiation: Spring 2027
- b. Semester/Year of Full Implementation of Program: Spring 2028
- c. Semester/Year First Certificates will be awarded: Spring 2028
- d. Annual Number of Graduates expected (once the program is established): 20
- e. Projected Future Trends for number of students enrolled in the program: In two years, it is likely to increase to 30 students or more.

### **3. Student Demand**

- a. Provide documentation of evidence of student demand for this program, which may include a student survey.

As noted above, as long as the graduate certificate in Women's and Gender Studies has existed, students from terminal MAs and professional degrees have expressed their desire to complete coursework in WGS but have not been able to complete the certificate. This shorter, tailorable certificate will make that possible. Affiliate faculty in professional degree programs also report student interest in completing training in this area.

A survey was administered to determine interest among graduate students across professional and terminal master's programs. Fifty students completed the survey. Results showed strong interest in the proposed certificate. In response to the question, "How relevant do you think a Gender-Informed Practice Certificate would be to your current or future professional work?," 56% (28 students) responded "very relevant," 14% (7 students) "relevant," and 22% (13 students) "somewhat relevant," for a total of 92% of students surveyed. In response to the

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.onetonline.org/link/summary/11-9151.00> , <https://www.onetonline.org/link/summary/19-5011.00>

question, “How interested would you be in completing a Gender-Informed Practice Certificate if offered?” 40% (20 students) responded “very interested,” 22% (11 students) “interested,” and 22% (11 students) “somewhat interested,” for a total of 84% of students surveyed.

b. Provide evidence that demand will be sufficient to sustain reasonable enrollment.

The one course specific to the certificate, WMST 7020, is the only course in which we would need to sustain enrollments; all other courses students would take are existing courses that routinely meet enrollment requirements. Based on projected demand for the certificate, we will offer WMST 7020 every Spring semester and anticipate a course enrollment of about 10 graduate students each time.

c. To what extent will minority student enrollments be greater than, less than, or equivalent to the proportion of minority students in the total student body?

Women’s and Gender Studies courses tend to attract minoritized students at a higher proportion than the general student body; we expect that is likely to be the case for this certificate as well. The Master of Social Work degree attracts a similarly diverse student body (60% White; 25% Black/African American; 9.3% Hispanic/Latinx; 4.8% Multiracial; 3.4% Asian).

#### **4. Program of Study**

The program of study requires 12 hours including:

3 hours of required coursework:

WGST 7020: Intro to Women’s and Gender Studies for Practitioners

9 hours of elective coursework, with at least 3 hours from these course offerings:

WMST 6030: Masculinities

WMST 6100: Queer Theories

WMST 6120: Sex, Politics, Science, and Reproduction

WMST 6170S: Environment, Gender, Race, & Class

WMST 6650: Reproductive Health in the U.S. and the World

WMST 6690: History of Sexuality

WMST 8011: Feminist Research Methods

WMST 8020: Advanced Feminist Theories

WMST 8030: Transnational Gender Studies

WMST 8100: LGBTQ Studies

The remaining 6 hours may draw from the offerings listed above OR additional courses not listed here (from WGS, students' home departments, or other units) may be petitioned to count toward certificate hours.

- b. Identify any new courses created for this program

WGST 7020: Intro to Women's and Gender Studies for Practitioners

WMST 6650: Reproductive Health in the U.S. and the World

Both will be taught by existing WGS faculty; additional staffing resources will not be required.

## 5. Model Program and Accreditation

- a. Identify any model programs, accepted disciplinary standards, and accepted curricular practices against which the proposed program could be judged. Evaluate the extent to which the proposed curriculum is consistent with these external points of reference and provide a rationale for significant inconsistencies and differences that may exist.

While certificates in women and gender studies and “gender-affirming practices” are offered at universities across the country, our certificate in “Gender-Informed Professional Practice” will be relatively unique. It is comparable to a normal WGS cert but specially designed in shorter format for students in practice-oriented fields. Additional related programs include the MA in Applied Gender Studies at Claremont Graduate University, the combined MSW/MA in Women's and Gender Studies at DePaul and Loyola in Chicago, the Pittsburgh School of Social Work's certificate in Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies, and UPenn School of Social Work's LGBTQ+ certificate, but our proposed certificate is unique in that it is an add-on certificate that can be pursued by students in a range of professional degree programs and terminal masters.

- b. If program accreditation is available, provide an analysis of the ability of the program to satisfy the curricular standards of such specialized accreditation.

n/a

## 6. Student Learning Outcomes

A graduate of the Certificate in Gender-Informed Professional Practice should be able to achieve the following learning outcomes:

- 1) Demonstrate a critical understanding of historical and contemporary perspectives on gender.
- 2) Use relevant theoretical frameworks to understand complex gendered phenomena.
- 3) Apply an interdisciplinary gender-informed framework to analyze and address issues relevant to their particular area of professional practice.
- 4) Analyze and evaluate the relevance of gender and its interactions with other social structures across domains relevant to their professional practice context (e.g., organizations, healthcare, counseling, education, law, social policy, etc.).

- 5) Evaluate and integrate gender-informed, intersectional insights into elements of professional practice, demonstrating the ability to design, implement, or assess policies, programs, or interventions that promote equity and inclusion.

Curriculum map:

<i>Learning Outcome</i>	<i>This outcome will especially be practiced in:</i>
1) Demonstrate a critical understanding of historical and contemporary perspectives on gender.	WMST 7020
2) Use relevant theoretical frameworks to understand complex gendered phenomena.	WMST 7020 and 3 hours from one of the following courses:  WMST 6030: Masculinities WMST 6100: Queer Theories WMST 6120: Sex, Politics, Science, and Reproduction WMST 6170S: Environment, Gender, Race, & Class WMST 6690: History of Sexuality WMST 8011: Feminist Research Methods WMST 8020: Advanced Feminist Theories WMST 8030: Transnational Gender Studies WMST 8100: LGBTQ Studies
3) Apply an interdisciplinary gender-informed framework to analyze and address issues relevant to their particular area of professional practice.  4) Analyze and evaluate the relevance of gender and its interactions with other social structures across domains relevant to their professional practice context (eg, organizations, healthcare, counseling, education, law, social policy, etc.).	6 hours from one of the courses above OR additional courses not listed here (from WGS, students' home departments, or other units) that may be petitioned to count toward certificate hours
5) Evaluate and integrate gender-informed, intersectional insights into elements of professional practice, demonstrating the ability to design, implement, or assess policies,	Students in 7020 will integrate these insights in their final project (which will involve a simulation or model). They will also integrate these insights in the practice-based courses they take in their hope disciplines.

programs, or interventions that promote equity and inclusion.	
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## **7. Assessment and Admissions**

Students from the required introductory course in the certificate, WMST 7020, will be asked to provide responses to questions developed by the faculty member teaching that course to assess individual learning outcomes and examine how well the student recalls, interprets, and applies course concepts using a rubric. These assessments will provide a sense of student knowledge early in their program.

In addition, students will be sent an online survey upon completion of the certificate to assess learning outcomes. This survey will provide faculty with data to indicate areas of strength and areas needing improvement for the certificate program as a whole. Survey data can also be compared to the responses to the earlier assessments to understand student growth over the course of pursuing the certificate.

**Admission:** Students will gain entry into the certificate by enrolling in WMST 7020 or by discussing their intent to enroll with the WGS director of graduate studies. A brief enrollment form will be provided to each student, and the director of graduate studies will formally enroll students in the certificate program via the registrar's SGASTDN form. Any graduate student at UGA may enroll. Students may count courses taken prior to WMST 7020 toward their certificate hours if the courses fulfill the criteria in the certificate's program of study.

### **Please submit documentation of the following approvals with the proposal:**

- Department Head/Director
- Dean/Vice President
- Heads of any academic units which offer courses used in the program of study
- Heads of any academic units which offer similar programs



# Institute for Women's and Gender Studies

*Franklin College of Arts and Sciences*

**UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA**

30 Jan 2026

Dear Dean Stenport,

The Institute for Women's and Gender Studies is pleased to submit the attached proposal for approval for a Graduate Certificate in Professional Practice. Developed in conversation with affiliates and students in professional degree programs (e.g., Social Work, Public Health, Public Administration), this new certificate differs from our existing one in that it is a shorter program of study that will be achievable in the more limited time frame of these students' degree programs, and is explicitly oriented toward using the insights of women's and gender studies in professional practice settings.

Please let us know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Patricia Richards, Director WGS

Paula P. Lemons, Sr. Associate Dean, Franklin College

WGS Curriculum Committee: Dr. Patricia Richards, Dr. Cecilia Herles, and Dr. Kelly Happe, and Dr. Ingie Hovland

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