

Cultural Competency Certificate Frequently Asked Questions

General Information:

The School of Social Sciences' Cultural Competency Certificate is offered to all undergraduates interested in supplementing their education with cultural awareness, knowledge, and skills. Requiring a minimum of five courses, the certification facilitates the study of cultural knowledge and diversity, inequalities and advocacy, cultural gaps, and culturally effective leadership.

Why is this training important?

Many students seek to attend graduate school or receive a solid placement in their field of interest. As the US is becoming more diverse, there is a need for advocates addressing social justice and equality. The CC Certificate will provide students a better understanding in diversity, culture, sexuality and gender, and globalization.

As students are required to take a class in diversity, a deep-structured understanding of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality in America is still needed. The CC Certificate training will take a community-empowerment approach to help students promote social justice while learning skills that will enhance their quality services and leadership skills.

Can any student outside the major earn the certificate?

Yes, all UCI students are encouraged to consider the certificate to augment their academic portfolios. Although the certificate is offered through the Social Policy and Public Service major, students from all majors can take the series of courses.

What are the benefits to earning the certificate as a scholar or professional?

There are multiple benefits to the certificate when students are interested in being competitive for graduate school or the workforce. As the country is becoming more diversified, there is a call to all professions to hire culturally knowledgeable and skilled leaders. Whether a student is pursuing graduate school or the workforce, training on advocacy, inequality will enhance their portfolio.

Other benefits include:

- Improved employee retention in future job placement
- Increased morale in a diverse working environment
- Increased effective leadership
- Increased self-awareness

What are the specific educational and professional gains with the Cultural Competency Certificate?

The knowledge and skills gained through the required curriculum is valuable for all professions

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in varying fields of service (ranging from business, education, social work, psychology, to medicine and public health).

As students are seeking a solid educational foundation for their future, it is critical they do not engage in cultural encapsulation. Being culturally encapsulated increases the risk of using stereotypes, becoming judgmental, and imposing their values on others.

Specific gains include:

- Cultural awareness and knowledge
- Cultural skills to engage with diverse and marginalized groups
- Perspective about inequality and means to better serve a group
- More confidence and competence in working with multiple groups

Can I take any classes to earn the certificate in Cultural Competency?

As you are seeking a communitarian model for education, the cultural competency certificate will require a class in (1) Diversity in America, (2) Culture and Politics, (3) Gender and Sexuality, (4) Global Aspect, and (5) History. Please consult the list of pre-approved classes that fit under the identified categories: <https://www.spps.socsci.uci.edu/files/docs/2018/Approved%20List.pdf>

Can I petition for another class to qualify for the certificate?

If you have taken a course not on the list that you feel fulfills one of the 5 domains of training, you can share the name of the class and description of the course with the coordinator of the certificate program. If the curriculum is fitting to the area you wish to fulfill, the request will be considered.

When should I start to pursue the Cultural Competency Certificate?

Students are encouraged to start planning to complete certificates upon their junior and senior years. It is recommended that students take the general breadth requirements to facilitate their educational learning. If you are an early planner, you can visit the SPPS counselor (i.e., Chika Kono) to start identifying a good set of classes to fulfill the major's requirements and overlap the certificate classes.

How do I apply for the Cultural Competency Certificate?

The Cultural Competency Certificate is accepting applications year-round to facilitate the completion of the certificate. There is a online form to fill out highlighting the classes you have taken to fulfill the requirements: <https://www.spps.socsci.uci.edu/certificate/application.php>

Please direct any questions to Rachel Neer at rachel.neer@uci.edu.