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## Developing a Research Certificate Program for Your Library

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# Developing a Research Certificate Program for Your Library

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## PURPOSE

This recipe teaches librarians how to cook up successful, hands-on, multi-module research certificate programs tailored to the needs of their academic or library communities.

## TARGET AUDIENCE

Academic librarians, especially liaison librarians, will find this recipe tasty. The program could also be easily adapted for first-year experience (FYE) librarians, public librarians, and even special librarians.

## INGREDIENTS

- LibGuides or similar tool for creating the certificate program site
- Classroom with presentation capabilities. A whiteboard or flip pad for in-class activities is also useful.
- Laptops or computers for hands-on activities
- Certificates to award at the end of the program
- Prizes for weekly “Question of the Week” giveaways. We use library-logoed water bottles and travel mugs.
- LibWizard, SurveyMonkey, or similar tool for registration and assessment

## INSTRUCTIONS

### *Planning and Development*

1. List broad areas to cover in the program.

These will be the topics for your weekly modules. You should aim for six to eight weekly modules.

2. Brainstorm subtopics and resources for each weekly module. Map subtopics to specific resources, if possible. The list should be exhaustive. You will prioritize and cut later.
3. Select two or three of the most important subtopics and resources in each module to be the core of that week’s module. These should be covered in-depth during the instruction sessions.
4. Build a LibGuide (or other site) for the certificate program. Each weekly module should have its own tab and should include in-class activities, handouts, and links to additional resources.
5. Meet with stakeholders (e.g., teaching faculty and administration) to discuss and get feedback about the program. Their support is critical in the program’s success. Modify as needed based on stakeholders’ feedback.

### *Promotion*

1. Create an online registration form using LibWizard (or similar tool). Include the registration page URL or QR code on all promotional materials.
2. Promote the program in a variety of ways, including posters, email blasts, the library’s website, social media, campus

publications, and during instruction for other classes. Word-of-mouth by students can also work in your favor after the program is established.

### *Teaching the Program*

1. Weekly sessions are part lecture and part hands-on practice. Students follow along with the instructor to complete in-class worksheets and answer specific questions using the assigned resources. Students may be paired or grouped into small teams for peer-learning.
2. Each class ends with a “Question of the Week.” The first student to answer the question using a resource discussed that week wins a prize.
3. Follow-up each week with an email recap-ing topics covered that week and looking ahead.
4. Record attendance and allow students to track their progress toward completing the program.
5. Award certificates to students who successfully complete the program. Plan a small reception to present the certificates. Be sure to invite stakeholders (e.g., faculty and administrators) to attend.

### *Wrapping Up*

1. Have participants complete a post-program assessment.

2. Prepare a written summary report of the program for your library's administration.
3. Modify and update materials as needed.

### CAUTIONS/ADVICE

First, find champions for the certificate program. Work to get support and buy-in from teaching faculty, student advisors, and administrators. Better yet, suggest that they complete the program themselves. Second, have an "elevator pitch" ready that succinctly articulates what the program is, why it's important to students, and how it will benefit them. Finally, be flexible. Reevaluate the program after each term and decide where it can be improved.

### ASSESSMENT

Assessment is an important part of the program. Send a survey to all participants at the end of the program to collect information about their experience, including the most and least useful parts of the program and things that could be changed in the future. Tweak the program as needed based on this feedback.

### REFLECTION

The UAB Libraries' Business Research Certificate Program (now Toolkit) has been recognized by faculty and administrators as an integral part of the campus-wide educational experience and has won both national and international recognition. You can find more information at <https://guides.library.uab.edu/businesscertificate>

