

## Provost's Comprehensive Program Review Report

**Institution:** Middle Georgia State University

**Academic Program Name:** Graduate Cert. in Technical Writing & Digital Communication

**CIP Code:** 231303

**College or School:** School of Arts & Letters

**Department:** English

**Date of Last Internal Review:** N/A (first CPR)

**Outcome of Previous Program Review (brief narrative statement):** N/A

**Current Date:** 5/18/2022

**Provost Response:** Academic Affairs acknowledges the documented value of the Grad Cert. in Technical Writing and Digital Communication. The program's demonstrable commitment to academic strategic planning and innovation has yielded adequate enrollment growth and remains a successful option as a graduate program pathway and stackable certificate.

**Program Quality and Productivity Improvement Plan:** Following a review of the Chairs Report, the IERB comments, and the Deans' appraisal, the Office of the Provost concurs with the findings and supports the documented plan of action.

- *exploring flexibility in the Certificate curriculum—we have had some students petition to have course substitutions*
- *continuing persistent marketing and recruitment efforts through the USG system (staff and students), refining and expanding our marketing outside of Georgia*
- *increased, targeted marketing to student populations who might find the Certificate an attractive credential on its own*
- *broadening our cadre of excellent, highly qualified graduate faculty.*

### Categorical Summation

Check any of the following to categorically describe action(s) the institution will take concerning this program.

#### X Program MEETS Institution's Criteria

**X Program is critical to the institutional mission and will be retained.**

Program is critical to the institutional mission and is growing or a high demand field and thus will be enhanced.

Program PARTIALLY MEETS Institution's Criteria and will be re-evaluated in \_\_\_\_\_.

Program DOES NOT MEET Institution's Criteria

Program will be placed on a monitoring status.

Program will undergo substantive curricular revisions.

Program will be deactivated.

Program will be voluntarily terminated.

Other (identify/add text):

Provost or VPAA Signature:



Date:

6/1/2022

## Comprehensive Program Review Report

**Academic Program Name:** Graduate Cert in Technical Writing & Digital Communication

**College or School:** School of Arts & Letters

**Department:** English

**Date of Last Internal Review:** None; this is the initial review.

**Outcome of Previous Program Review (brief narrative statement, if applicable):**

**Current Date:** 4/8/2022

**Executive Summary:** *Provide a summary related to the academic program's quality, viability, and productivity of efforts in teaching and learning, scholarship, and service as appropriate to the institution's mission. If this is the initial review of the program address how the program is/is not meeting the enrollment and credit hour projects contained in the original program proposal. Include a statement of plans for action based on the overall categorical summation contained in the next section.*

The certificate in Technical Writing & Digital Communication supports the mission of the University by providing an access pathway to graduate education. The certificate has a slightly lower GPA entrance requirement than our other MGA master's level programs, providing students a gateway to further graduate study. Specifically, students who successfully complete the stackable certificate can move on to the MA in Technical and Professional Writing and use most or all of their certificate credit towards the master's credential.

Current enrollment data in the program is artificially low because students who are simultaneously enrolled in the certificate and MA program are only counted in the MA. We are seeking ways to remedy that accounting. Additionally, while graduation numbers were low at the time CPR data was collected, positive growth is evident in more recent data. 11 students graduated with the certificate in MGA's most recent (December 2021) commencement.

The certificate in Technical Writing & Digital Communication supports the mission of MGA, is economical to run, boasts healthy enrollment, and has proven productivity. The certificate is clearly strong and viable.

### Categorical Summation

Check any of the following to categorically describe action(s) the institution will take concerning this program.

Program MEETS Institution's Criteria

- Program is critical to the institutional mission and will be retained.
- Program is critical to the institutional mission and is growing or a high demand field and thus will be enhanced.

Program DOES NOT MEET Institution's Criteria

- Program will be placed on a monitoring status.
- Program will undergo substantive curricular revisions.
- Program will be deactivated.
- Program will be voluntarily terminated.
- Other (identify/add text):

Academic Dean Signature: *Mary McCartin Wear*  
Dean of Graduate Studies Signature (when applicable): *Soretha Clayton*

Date: 4/8/2022

## IERB's Comprehensive Program Review Rubric and Evaluation

**Date Reviewed: 3/8/2022**

**Program Reviewed: Graduate Certificate in Technical Writing and Digital Communications**

**Contextual Notes:** Summarize any demographic or environmental factors described in the introduction that might significantly impact assessment of the program

The Graduate Certificate in Technical Writing and Digital Communication is a certificate, not a full degree program. The certificate has small total enrollment and began in fiscal year 2017. The certificate has been delivered entirely online

Area of Focus	Exemplary Area	Satisfactory Area	Area of Concern	No Evidence	Notes
Enrollment	<i>This program has significantly positive enrollment trends and robust credit hour production</i>	<b><i>This program has stable or moderately positive enrollment trends and healthy credit hour production</i></b>	<i>This program has negative enrollment trends and weak credit hour production</i>		Satisfactory – there's consistency in enrollment. 5-yr growth: 15.02% (Fall 2017 - Fall 2021)
<b>Graduation Trends</b> USG benchmark:  Bachelor's Degrees: 10 graduates/year	<i>Three year rolling average greatly exceeds USG minimum benchmark for degrees conferred</i>	<i>Three year rolling average meets or exceeds USG minimum benchmark for degrees conferred</i>	<b><i>Three year rolling average does not meet USG minimum benchmark for degrees conferred; the program is "low performing" by USG definition</i></b>	No evidence	<i>Certificate began in 2017 and has low total enrollment. Graduates total is increasing incrementally</i>

## IERB's Comprehensive Program Review Rubric and Evaluation

<p><b>Graduate, Associate's or Certificates: 5 graduates/year</b></p> <p>Programs falling under these benchmarks are designated as "low performing"</p>					
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### **Program Strengths of Note:**

The number of students graduating with the certificate is increasing incrementally, in spite of an available M.A. in Technical Writing

Program offers advanced marketable skills for working professionals. Class enrollments for certificate classes are robust. This program is available for those who don't meet the M.A. entrance requirements or who want the certificate only

This program has stable or moderately positive enrollment trends

### **Areas of Concern:**

The low (yet gently increasing) enrollment trend could be a concern to the degree that the certificate competes with other more demanded options in the near term.

There is some overlap with the M.A. in Technical and Professional Writing, with some certificate students merging into the M.A. program without formally getting the certificate en route. This may necessitate the continued monitoring of interest in the certificate program, which is already being done by the English Department.

Low number of yearly graduates.

## **IERB's Comprehensive Program Review Rubric and Evaluation**

**Other Comments:** Great program mission!



**Comprehensive Program Review**

**FY 2021 – 2022**

**Institution:** Middle Georgia State University

**Academic Program:** Graduate Certificate in Technical Writing & Digital Communications

**School:** School of Arts and Letters

**Department:** English

**CIP Code:** 231303

**Date of Last Internal Review:** 1<sup>st</sup> CPR, program started Fall 2017

**Faculty Completing Report:** Chip Rogers

**Current Date:** 1/4/2022

**5 Year Enrollment by Campus and Graduation Trends**

**Enrollment**

Campus	Fall 2017	Fall 2018	Fall 2019	Fall 2020	Fall 2021	5 YR Growth	Fall 2017 compared to Fall 2021 only
Macon							
Cochran							
Warner Robins							
Dublin							
Eastman							
<b>Online</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>15.02%</b>	<b>75%</b>
Off Campus							
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>15.02%</b>	<b>75%</b>

**Graduates**

- For data consistency, the fiscal year is in which the degree was awarded. For examples, fiscal year 2019 includes degrees conferred in Summer 2018, Fall 2018, and Spring 2019.

FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	3 YR Growth	FY19 compared to FY21 only
N/A	N/A	2	3	4	41.42%	100%

**Program Mission Alignment**

The cross-disciplinary Graduate Certificate in Technical Writing and Digital Communication program is offered collaboratively by the Department of English, the Department of Media, Culture, and the Arts, and the School of Information Technology. The program’s mission is developing students’ advanced skills in writing, web development, and workplace communication in the digital age. This post-baccalaureate certificate is designed for working professionals.

In developing students’ writing and communication skills, the Graduate Certificate in Technical Writing and Digital Communication supports the School of Arts and Letters mission of providing access to education in the humanities that promotes creativity, elevates culture, and prepares intellectually agile citizens to serve our communities and the creative economy of Georgia. The success of Graduate Certificate graduates in a range of fields—from education, Information Technology, and technical writing to further graduate studies—clearly advances Middle Georgia State University’s mission of educating and graduating “inspired, lifelong learners whose scholarship and careers enhance the region through professional leadership, innovative partnerships, and community engagement.”

**Program Age, Changes since Last Review, Concentrations**

The Graduate Certificate in Technical Writing and Digital Communication became operative in fall 2017. We have made no revisions to the Certificate curriculum since its inception. One notable change in the program was experimenting with offering the ENGL 5106 class full-session in fall 2018. We returned to eight-week sessions for the class in fall 2019, for consistency with the rest of the program. 2021-2022 is the Certificate’s first Comprehensive Program Review.

**Accreditation**

This Graduate Certificate operates under no external discipline-specific accreditation process.

## Delivery Methods

The Graduate Certificate in Technical Writing and Digital Communication is offered exclusively online, in eight-week sessions. Students can enroll in the program at any point of the academic year—first- or second-session fall or spring and summer.

## Benchmarks of Progress

**Enrollment:** The table above indicates consistency in enrollments over the program's five years, with an average of 6.4 students each year, and overall growth of 75% from first year to fifth. While the Certificate enrollment is modest in comparison to many other graduate programs, we anticipated that interest in the Certificate would likely decline and perhaps wither away when we introduced the Master of Arts in Technical and Professional Writing in fall 2019. So we are pleased that the program continues to be viable as its own end. It offers a path into the M.A. program for those who do not quite meet the M.A. entrance requirements, and the Certificate does still appeal to some students as a valuable credential in its own right. Overall, of course, the Certificate serves as foundational core, a stackable, modular program within our larger Master's Technical and Professional Writing program.

**Graduation:** Program graduation rates show small numbers overall, but steady growth, doubling from two graduates in 2019 to four in 2021. Surely impacting these small numbers is the great majority of Certificate students who choose to pursue the Master's degree without formally seeking the Certificate credential along the way.

## Plans for action

The Graduate Certificate remains as the essential core to our M.A. program (15 credit hours of the M.A.'s 30 credit hours), and class enrollments for the Certificate courses are typically quite robust, with Certificate students, M.A. students, and graduate students of other programs (IT MS and Ph.D. and the new Public Relations M.A., e.g.). Recognizing that we have sustained interest in the Certificate even after rolling out the M.A. in Technical and Professional Writing, our priority plans for action include:

- exploring flexibility in the Certificate curriculum—we have had some students petition to have course substitutions
- continuing persistent marketing and recruitment efforts through the USG system (staff and students), refining and expanding our marketing outside of Georgia
- increased, targeted marketing to student populations who might find the Certificate an attractive credential on its own
- broadening our cadre of excellent, highly qualified graduate faculty.

## **Trends and Market Forces Impacting Program Demand**

The market for professionals with training in translating technical material into clear and readable documents of all kinds, print and digital, video and interactive, is as strong as ever. Given the explosive and continual innovation in technologies in virtually all areas of modern life, it is clear that working professionals will continue to desire and pursue the skills our Graduate Certificate provides.