

# **Bachelor of Science in Professional Studies**

## **Akamai University**

**Dr Douglass Capogrossi**

**Revised: 29 July 2017**



Akamai University is an international university, serving the needs of mid-career professionals. When the occasion merits, the University admits well-qualified candidates into a special Bachelor of Science in Professional Studies. The degree is pursued partly through an extensive college equivalency review of the participant's academic training and professional achievements. This preliminary review is pursued in a formal and rigorous manner to determine which requisite levels of knowledge have been achieved by the participants in core areas of the Bachelor's degree. Only mature adult professionals are considered for enrollment.

Students that require further study to achieve the Bachelor's degree requirements are enrolled in the needed courses.

Participants that wish to complete a program leading to the Bachelor of Science in Professional Studies (or Bachelor of Arts in Professional Studies) must complete or demonstrate prior completion of a series of studies through which significant scholarly literature has been explored, for which the student is examined and for which scholarly papers have been prepared. Within these courses, the academic content should be taken to a significant depth and progressively developed and integrated as the basis for advanced study.

Participants are expected to acquire a coherent body of knowledge in a chosen discipline, which emphasizes the underlying theories, principles, and practices and associated problem-solving techniques. Participants are expected to develop the academic skills and competencies necessary to understand and evaluate the effectiveness of new information and research, and present mature academic arguments through scholarly presentations with referencing from a range of sources. Participants must demonstrate the ability to integrate scholarly learning with knowledge and techniques learned within the career environment.

### **Entry Requirements**

As prerequisite for admittance to the Bachelor of Science (Arts) in Professional Studies Program, applicants should have completed the secondary program, have at least two full years or equivalent in postsecondary studies and training, and at least three years of meaningful career and community experience.

### **Summary of Degree Requirements**

As an undergraduate student, participants are expected to acquire a coherent body of knowledge in a chosen discipline, which emphasizes the underlying theories, principles, and practices and associated problem-solving techniques. Participants are expected to develop the academic skills and competencies necessary to understand and evaluate the effectiveness of new information and

## **Bachelor of Science in Professional Studies**

research, and present mature academic arguments through scholarly presentations with referencing from a range of sources. Participants must demonstrate the ability to integrate scholarly learning with knowledge and techniques learned within the career environment.

The program includes studies in general education, a major and minor concentration, a professional practicum and electives to satisfy the minimum credit requirements for the degree. Participants must also complete a senior professional project and a written final examination for degree completion. Required studies are outlined below and discussed in the following sections.

General Education Requirements (Required: 30 credits)

The Academic Major (Required: 18 credits)

The Academic Minor (Required: 12 credits)

Professional Practicum (Required: 9 credits)

Final Examination (Required: 6 credits)

Senior Project (Required: 15 credits)

Electives (30 credits)

### **General Education (30 credits)**

Students enrolled in the Bachelor of Science (Arts) in Professional Studies Program must demonstrate completion of a total of 30 semester credits in general education competencies, including at least six credits in physical sciences and mathematics, the social sciences, and arts and humanities. The general education requirements assure students develop an understanding and appreciation of the social and culture differences and interdependency of the global community, and build an awareness of themselves as spiritual, social, and biological beings.

**Physical Sciences and Mathematics (6 credits minimum)** Through this competency, students build an understanding the physical environment. Courses from various fields help fulfill this requirement: environmental science, health, nutrition and fitness, and other physical and biological sciences, mathematics, algebra, geometry, accounting, personal finance, computer science, statistics, or financial management.

**History and Social Sciences (6 credits minimum)** Through this competency, students build an understanding of human culture. Courses from the following fields help fulfill this requirement: history, government, civilization, political science, human development, economics, business studies, administration, psychology, sociology, education, anthropology and other related subjects.

**Arts and Humanities (6 credits minimum)** Through this competency, students build an understanding of effective communication. Courses from the following fields help fulfill this requirement: language studies, composition, literature, creative writing, music, philosophy, creative arts, performing arts, and other arts and humanities.

### **The Academic Major (18 credits)**

A minimum of 18 semester credits in any one academic concentration is required for the academic major. These core academic competencies emphasize the theories, principles and

## **Bachelor of Science in Professional Studies**

practices at the foundation of the discipline, and the philosophical and cultural implications of the field. They also incorporate applied elements of the discipline. Credits for the academic major must meet the expectations of Akamai faculty in the appropriate field of study.

To complete these requirements, students may transfer appropriate coursework completed at outside colleges and training institutions and from college proficiency examinations. Students may apply appropriate college equivalency credits earned through portfolio assessment. Relevant elements from your general education coursework may also apply toward the academic major.

### **The Academic Minor (12 credits)**

Through the assessment of the student's college transcripts, non-college training documentation, and professional portfolios, an undergraduate student must demonstrate competency in the core subject matter of a degree concentration (from among those available across the University) comprising a degree minor. A minimum of 12 semester credits in any one academic concentration is required for the academic minor. Such credits must meet the expectations of Akamai faculty in the appropriate field of study.

To complete these requirements, students may transfer appropriate coursework completed at outside colleges and training institutions and from college proficiency examinations. Students may apply appropriate college equivalency credits earned through portfolio assessment. Relevant elements from your general education coursework may also apply toward the academic major.

### **Professional Practicum (9 credits)**

An essential component of the transition students make from the academic to the professional environment is the integration and application of academic theories, principles and practices to the requirements and expectations of the professional arena. To encourage successful transition to the professional environment, each student must undertake a supervised field study practicum in an approved site with business, industry, government or nonprofit sector (or a supervised independent field study project). The goal of the field study is to allow students to investigate core aspects of the discipline within the professional environment through close contact with practitioners and real world situations.

### **Electives (30 credits or as required)**

Participants must accumulate a minimum of 120 semester credits toward the degree, as outlined by the University. In addition to the credit requirements for basic education, academic major and minor, and the mandated practicum, project and examination, students must complete additional course credits by elective to bring the summary total of approved coursework to a minimum of 120 semester credits.

### **Senior Project (15 credits)**

The fifteen-credit Senior Project is undertaken upon successful completion of the final examination. The project is intended to provide the University with a quality review of the student's professional and academic competencies.

## Bachelor of Science in Professional Studies

The process includes a brief proposal stage, data gathering and manuscript preparation stage, and a project review stage. Students are provided an opportunity to investigate an area of special interest in their academic concentration, which has potential for advancing their profession development.

The Senior Project is presented in a formal manuscript approximating 50 double-spaced typewritten pages including attachments with proper referencing and citations of the scholarly literature. The student's project should convey a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter. While most projects may take the form of a standard research project, with the mentor's approval, students may pursue another appropriate format such as an audio- or videotape project, a recorded public performance, a business plan, original work of art, detailed case study or another relevant project.

**Senior Project Proposal.** Before beginning the research of the scholarly literature and data gathering activities and any actual writing of your project manuscript, students prepare and submit a formal proposal for approval. The University provides an approved research proposal format requirements within the online program handbook. Students should be prepared to provide necessary facts and information as needed by the mentor in reviewing the research proposal. Students are also expected to carefully examine the University's manuscript guidelines to conform their documents.

It will prove best for students to begin discussions with their primary mentor concerning the Senior Project topic soon after registration. After sufficient exploration, the expectations of the mentor and the manuscript requirements for the project will become clear. Students should also discuss with their mentor the issues of research protocol related to working with human subjects and the use and care of live animals, if this is to be part of the Senior Project.

**Manuscript Outline.** The student will be guided in the presentation of a master outline for the proposed manuscript. This will help the student more fully develop the proposal package and clarify the structure of the academic argument. The manuscript outline is intended to bring strength to the scholarly discussion, helping the student organize an effective exploration of the subject matter. The student should carefully review the University's written guidelines for manuscript preparation provided in the online program handbook.

**Referencing the Literature.** Students pursuing the alternative Bachelor's Program may be new to the referencing requirements for major academic papers and should discuss these with the primary mentor before beginning the project.

**Manuscript Presentation.** The Senior Project should closely adhere to the manuscript guideline presented in the University's online program handbook and the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association. The manuscript should be prepared and bound in an acceptable manner for permanent archival storage. Spiral and press binding are acceptable.

**Project Review.** Once students have prepared the Senior Project manuscript, they will schedule the formal review process. The primary mentor and the Center Director (or an assigned

## **Bachelor of Science in Professional Studies**

representative) will conduct both the formal physical review of the manuscript and the oral review of the project.

The physical review of the project manuscript usually takes the review committee two to four weeks. Each reviewer will prepare questions and commentary relative to the underlying review of the literature, the project methodology, the mechanics of the project, and formal presentation of the findings, conclusions and recommendations.

The oral review of the project is conducted under the direction of the primary mentor with the assistance of Center Director (or an assigned representative). The examination is carried out by telephone conference call or another synchronous method and is designed to allow detailed investigation of the project. The faculty reviewers explore issues related to the project including methodology, review of literature and interpretation of the findings.

One outcome of the project review process is a set of final expectations directing the student through the remaining tasks for correcting the project manuscript. Once the final manuscript is approved, the student will arrange suitable binding for the document and later ship the bound project to the University headquarters for permanent archival storage.

### **Final Examination (6 credits)**

Once the coursework requirements are satisfactorily completed, the University schedules the Final Examination. The student's primary faculty advisor, and a second faculty member representing the student's minor field of study, conducts the written and oral elements of the final examination. The written portion is open book style with selected essay questions requiring creative responses that reach for the higher levels of cognition. The answers are expected to draw from the academic competencies of the student's program with proper referencing of the scholarly literature. The oral component of the examination is normally completed by synchronous electronic means and is intended to permit detailed investigation of the student's written responses.

### **Assessment of Degree Equivalency Credit**

The University respects the college-level prior learning of its adult students to the extent that such learning is appropriate to the degrees pursued by our students and satisfies the expectations of the University's faculty. The University allows prior learning to be credited toward the Bachelor's degree from transfer courses (by transcript review) and from appropriate career experience and non-college training (by professional portfolio evaluation).

Mid-career adults have creditworthy elements in their backgrounds for which sufficient credible evidence exists of advanced level learning. The source of prior learning might include work experience, non-college training, continuing education, seminars and conferences, career experiences and personal achievements, employment training, language training, technical classes, training leading to special certificates, diplomas and licenses and other advanced level learning obtained from personal and professional achievements. Under the direction of the University's primary mentors, and within certain clearly defined guidelines, students may submit

## **Bachelor of Science in Professional Studies**

and array of professional portfolios for assessment of college equivalency credit in fulfillment of the requirements for the alternative Bachelor's degree.

Participants may import as many as 90 credits from outside colleges and universities, formal training institutions, college equivalency examinations, and equivalency credit awards earned from assessment of prior learning and experience and challenge examinations completed under the direction of Akamai University faculty. Students must complete the practicum, the senior project and the final examination at Akamai University under the direction of faculty.

The route toward the award of the Bachelor's degree includes an extensive preliminary equivalency evaluation of the student's career background and educational preparation through an extensive assessment of prior learning. The process includes a review of college transcripts and non-college training documentation, and a thorough assessment of the student's professional portfolio. The following sections will assist in understanding the review processes.

- Review of Prior Education and Training Documentation
- Review of Professional Portfolios
- Conduct of Challenge Examinations

### **Review of Prior Education and Training Documentation**

College coursework and college level equivalency training completed at recognized education and training institutions are accepted credit-for-credit, provided the coursework satisfies meaningful elements of your program of studies. As a participant in the alternative undergraduate program, students may have an unlimited number of transfer credits applied toward their degree. Student's should carefully review the University's guidelines regarding transfer credits and explore these details with their primary mentor.

The University will accept all credits, point-for-point from recognized educational institutions, including training institutions (such as those organizations approved by the American Council of Education and other reputable groups across the global community). Formal transcripts or notarized affidavits must be provided for all awards of transfer credits. All transfer courses are translated to the semester credit system followed by the University.

### **Review of Professional Portfolios**

As a participant in the alternative undergraduate program, students may have an unlimited number of equivalency credits applied toward their degree through assessment of professional portfolios.

- Overview of Portfolio Process
- Prior Learning Policy
- The Portfolio Document
- Portfolio Evaluation
- General Guidelines for Review Process

## **Bachelor of Science in Professional Studies**

The professional portfolio should be developed relative to creditworthy elements of the student's career background for which sufficient credible evidence exists to correlate effectively with college-level learning objectives. The source of prior learning might be advanced employment experience, non-college training, continuing education, seminars and conferences, professional achievements, employment training, language training, technical classes, training leading to special certificates, diplomas and licenses or other advanced level learning obtained from personal and professional achievements.

Duplicative credit may not be awarded. Students are advised to carefully review the University's guidelines covering prior learning assessment and discuss these matters in detail with the primary mentor starting immediately after program registration.

**The Portfolio Document.** The portfolio document must be presented in a manner that allows a detailed formal evaluation to be made of the prior learning. Students are required to attach copies of the necessary documentation, affidavits and certificates that permit an effective comparison of the prior learning experiences to the course objectives. While the portfolio document must include this authentic documentation, an equally important element is the student's narrative that summarizes and discusses the knowledge, skills and competencies acquired in the professional setting, or through non-college training. Portfolios are allowed in all academic fields and are usually designed to permit the student to demonstrate higher levels of cognition where they have used the subject matter to address real world situations in a creative manner. Permission to submit a portfolio for assessment should be requested by the student at the time the Study Plan is established.

Prior learning assessment courses deemed complete will have the specified semester credits awarded on the student's permanent record. If a student is unsuccessful at passing the portfolio assessment, the mentor may decide to assign additional text and journal readings and other necessary exploratory activities in order to prepare the student for an additional course assessment (at additional cost to the student). After successfully completing these additional assignments and assessments, course credit will be granted. A standardized attachment to the Study Plan is used to communicate the content of the prior learning assessment to be undertaken.

**Portfolio Evaluation.** Professional portfolio evaluation is a detailed assessment of a student's prior learning in a limited and defined area, including the gathering together of authentic documents to validate and demonstrate advanced level learning. The task of the University faculty is to guide the student in structuring a formal written presentation in support of documentation from professional achievements and non-college training. To be awarded credit, all prior learning must clearly fulfill the academic objectives of the course and reflect the appropriate level of complexity in academic learning. The primary faculty advisor shall independently evaluate each course approved for portfolio assessment. Upon completion of each course pursued by prior learning assessment, at the time of submission of the course grade, the portfolio document is transferred by post to the University headquarters for storage in the University archival library.

## **Bachelor of Science in Professional Studies**

**General Guidelines for the Portfolio Review Process.** The following guidelines explain the process whereby Bachelor's students may progress through the alternative process of the College Equivalency Review.

- Students wishing to enroll for the alternative Bachelor's Program and pursue the equivalency review must submit a complete Admission Application including the \$100 Admission Fee.
- The University will assign a qualified primary mentor to assist the student in assembling an effective array of portfolio documents addressing the minimum requirements for the Bachelor's degree.
- The University will supply the student with standard portfolio presentation forms to be used in providing materials and information for equivalency review relative to professional achievements, non-college training, proficiency examinations, and prior college coursework.
- The primary mentor will assist the student in itemizing each element of prior learning for college equivalency credit (1-6 credits per element of the review) and will guide the student in gathering required documentation, transcripts from other schools, and written materials needed for review.
- The student will submit the entire document in binders with a complete Table of Contents.
- Photocopies of documentation, letters of support, affidavits and student narratives must be provided as background for items listed on the portfolio forms. A complete set of documents and supporting materials must be included.
- The tuition fee of \$3000 must be included, in advance of the portfolio submission, at the time of formal Registration.
- An additional \$500 tuition fee may be required if the initial review falls short of approval and an additional partial review is required.
- The assigned mentor will review the student's portfolio package in its entirety (transcripts and portfolio materials) and determine if the core elements and the required total of 120 semester credits are present. The primary mentor will request advisement from the University administration is consulting with appropriate faculty relative to certain areas of the portfolio review.
- Should the assigned mentor determine that additional materials, documentation (or further academic work) is required in a subject matter area; the student would be expected to respond accordingly prior to the issuance of the course credit and the degree.

### **Course Challenge Examinations**

Prior learning may also be awarded college equivalency credit through conduct of course challenge examinations. Challenge examinations allow students with prior learning to have study requirements waived in certain courses by passing assessments conducted by qualified academic mentors. Students are allowed to undertake course challenge examinations when it is clearly demonstrated they have acquired sufficient knowledge and expertise from prior experiences and training to satisfy the learning competencies and pass the final examination for the course under evaluation.



## **Bachelor of Science in Professional Studies**

To be considered for challenge examinations, students must submit documentation and information to faculty, which corresponds to courses being considered for challenge examination. Students outline the details of their background they believe satisfy the learning objectives for courses in question. Required information includes an overview of the relevant prior learning, the location, and person overseeing the professional activities, formal training, or college courses. Students should also submit a syllabus or outline for the prior courses, any scholarly papers or professional projects they completed, which supports the level of knowledge and competencies appropriate for competency areas of a course module for the program in which they are enrolled.

If the course instructor determines the student has acquired adequate prior knowledge, skills, and understandings appropriate for a specific competency areas for the course under consideration, the student will be granted eligibility to attempt a course challenge examination. Faculty in charge of the competency area under assessment will dictate the final requirements and scheduling of challenge examination. Course modules deemed eligible for challenge examinations should be scheduled by the primary faculty advisor for review within the Study Plan.

**Conducting the Challenge Examination.** Academic mentors may conduct the course challenge examinations by any combination of oral or written examination or by assignment of a scholarly paper, whichever is most appropriate to the subject matter. If the mentor conducts the challenge examination using telephone discussions, arrangements should be made for the student to initiate contact at a scheduled date and time. Test questions are to be prepared beforehand and oral examinations recorded for later review, if possible. In any case, mentors are expected to document the oral examination by journal notations.

If mentors use an essay type written examination, the test may be conducted in an open book fashion, with the questions requiring the student to demonstrate the ability to conceptualize with the subject matter at higher levels of cognition, to avoid simple reiteration. If mentors assign a course paper as a challenge examination, the written document should conform to acceptable manuscript style. Guidelines for such papers should require the student to express learning at higher levels of cognition, demonstrating an ability to explore the issues in a creative manner and answer complex and probing questions.

Upon completion of the challenge examination, course mentors prepare and send a written determination to the student. If the student has successfully passed the examination, a grade is assigned and course credit is awarded. Faculty reviewers are expected to submit the supportive documentation of the challenge examination to the University headquarters for archival storage in support of the student's program.

**Failure of Challenge Examinations.** If the student has not successfully passed the examination, a letter of determination prescribes a corrective action plan that must be completed to receive course credit. Should the student wish to complete the action plan, an additional fee is assessed per credit for re-examination. In all cases, challenge examinations,

## **Bachelor of Science in Professional Studies**

together with any assigned corrective action plans, should be completed within the maximum time allowed for the course.

The corrective action plan may include additional text and journal readings, and other exploratory activities that serve to prepare the student for reexamined. Once the student has successfully responded to the corrective actions, and has passed re-examination, a final grade and course credit will be assigned.