



Ketchikan

MUSEUMS

TOTEM HERITAGE CENTER

CERTIFICATE OF MERIT: an award for excellence in Native arts of the Northwest Coast

Questions and Answers for Certificate of Merit Candidates

- **Who can apply for this Certificate?**

Anyone who desires to create a record of achievement in Northwest Coast Native art can apply for a Certificate of Merit, and classes are open to all students in our community and beyond.

- **How will a Certificate of Merit benefit me?**

The Certificate is recognition of your skill in Northwest Coast Native Art, a record that offers proof of your dedication and abilities. The Certificate will be valuable to you in obtaining opportunities such as grants, scholarships, teaching positions, representation or exhibition in galleries and museums and for additional education. The Certificate of Merit program is also helpful in spurring you on in your artistic goals, helping you to build on your skills and complete work.

- **In what areas of study are Certificate of Merit awarded?**

There are three Certificate options:

- Northwest Coast Carving/Engraving
- Basketry/Textile Weaving
- Regalia Making

- **How do I apply?**

There are three requirements you will submit for review to apply for a Certificate of Merit:

- Completion of required core, merit-specific, and elective classes. *Full participation and 80% attendance are required to receive credit.* Totem Heritage Center staff will help you track your classes and assist with your application and in planning a course of study.
- Completion of an independently created art piece demonstrating your level of mastery.
- Portfolio of your work including high quality photos, resume, artist statement and biography.

The annual deadline for submitting your final application for a Certificate of Merit is May 1st.

- **Does everyone who completes the required courses receive a Certificate of Merit?**

The Certificate of Merit Committee will review your application and decide whether to award a Certificate based on your coursework, final art piece and portfolio, or to recommend that the candidate repeat one or more courses or further refine work.

- **Who is on the Certificate of Merit Committee?**

The committee is comprised of three individuals:

- Ketchikan Museum Department staff member;
- Prominent Northwest Coast artist who practices the art form of the applicant;
- Totem Heritage Center Advisory Committee member.

- **What criteria will be used in consideration of a Certificate?**

- Instructor reviews of your class projects, participation and your abilities;
- Attendance record and project completion in all required classes;
- Complete, professional portfolio demonstrating artistic excellence with high quality images, biography, artist statement and resume;
- The Committee's critique of an independently created art piece. This must be an original piece of work demonstrating your creativity and skill—no slides will be accepted.

- **What commitment is expected of me?**

A successful Certificate of Merit candidate is expected to:

- be a serious student who recognizes the value of knowledge and is dedicated to learning;
- uphold and foster the tradition of Native Arts of the Northwest Coast through advocacy, sharing knowledge, and your art;
- maintain the Certificate of Merit as valid recognition of excellence with the strength your work;
- apply your skills and share knowledge in the classroom and in your community;
- continue to grow and encourage the growth of others practicing Northwest Coast Native Art.

- **How long do I have to complete this program?**

The Certificate may be completed in three to four years; however, students have up to 10 years to complete the required classes and the final independent project. If you did not complete your courses within 10 years, you must be able to demonstrate a record of continuous practice of your art form independently or using other educational resources.

- **If I miss a course one year, will you offer it in the following year?**

Core Merit courses are offered at least every three years. All other courses are offered on a rotational basis of up to five years. Within that time, we will offer either the same course or courses that teach comparable skills and may be substituted to fill your requirements to achieve a Certificate of Merit.

- **I am not a beginning artist. I did not take the classes at the Totem Heritage Center to learn my craft. Can I apply for a waiver in order to take Intermediate or Advanced classes?**

Yes. Students can apply for a waiver for introductory courses if they already have the knowledge and skills taught in the course. You may apply for a waiver for up to four (4) intro courses.

- **How do I apply for a waiver?**

For each beginning class you intend to waive, you must submit:

- a waiver application detailing the other Totem Heritage Center classes you have taken in the subject or other means by which you have learned the subject. A signed letter of support from the master artist or instructor that has guided you may also be required;
- a completed independent project that demonstrates your grasp of the concepts taught in the class you will waive will need to be reviewed. This can be presented in a photographs or slides.

If you are granted a waiver after your application and artwork are reviewed with instructors, you will be able to bypass one or more beginning class and enroll in intermediate and advanced class(es).

- **I have already taken several courses at the Totem Heritage Center. Can they count towards my Certificate of Merit?**

The Totem Heritage Center maintains records of classes taken by each student. All classes already taken can be added when we begin tracking your progress towards a Certificate of Merit.

Certificate of Merit Curriculum

3 Core Merit Classes:

- Northwest Coast Art History
- Introduction to Northwest Coast Design
- Artist Marketing/Portfolio Development

Carving/ Engraving Certificate:

- Introduction to Power Tools
- Northwest Coast Design II
- Northwest Coast Design III
- Northwest Coast Carving I
- Tool Sharpening

PLUS:

Northwest Coast Carving II
Northwest Coast Carving III

OR

Northwest Coast Engraving I
Northwest Coast Engraving II

*Choice of 4 ELECTIVE CLASSES- AT LEAST 3 Electives must be Carving/Engraving classes. All must be 30+ hour courses. * You may repeat upper level carving or engraving classes and/or elective classes to fulfill the Elective requirement. **

Basketry/ Weaving Certificate:

- Cedar Bark Basketry I
- Cedar Bark Basketry II
- Cedar Bark Basketry III
- Cedar Bark Gathering/ Preparation
- Northwest Coast Basket Design

PLUS:

Spruce Root Gathering/Preparation
Spruce Root Weaving I
Spruce Root Weaving II

(OR 3
of the
following)

Chilkat Weaving I
Chilkat Weaving II
Ravenstail Weaving I
Ravenstail Weaving II

*Choice of 3 ELECTIVE CLASSES- AT LEAST 2 Electives must be Basketry/Weaving classes. All must be 30+ hour courses. * You may repeat upper level basketry classes and/or elective classes to fulfill the Elective requirement. **

Regalia Making Certificate:

- Northwest Coast Design II
- Northwest Coast Design III
- Northwest Coast Regalia I: Beginning Bead Work
- Northwest Coast Regalia II: Ceremonial Wool Clothing
- Northwest Coast Regalia III: Button Robe
- Northwest Coast Regalia: Leather Sewing

PLUS:

Chilkat Weaving I
Chilkat Weaving II

OR

Ravenstail Weaving I
Ravenstail Weaving II

*Choice of 3 ELECTIVE CLASSES- AT LEAST 2 Electives must be Regalia classes. All must be 30+ hour courses. * You may repeat upper level regalia classes and/or elective classes to fulfill the Elective requirement. **

Please contact staff at 225-5900 for more information or assistance with your Certificate of Merit.