

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA IN HUNTSVILLE
FACULTY CREDENTIALS POLICY

Number 02.01.57

Division Academic Affairs

Date June 2016; Reviewed/Revised August 28, 2023

Purpose The purpose of this policy is to define the credentials expected and to describe the credentialing process for full-time and part-time faculty, graduate teaching assistants (GTAs), and other individuals to teach courses at The University of Alabama in Huntsville ("UAH"), Adherence to this policy will ensure that all who teach are qualified for their teaching assignments. The policy will help maintain compliance with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) Standard 6.2.a Faculty Qualifications.

Policy The instructor assigned teaching responsibility for each academic credit course offered at UAH must document having the proper credentials for the discipline in which he or she is teaching. UAH bases its definition of faculty credentials on guidelines supplied by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). In Standard 6.2.a, SACSCOC requires, "For each of its educational programs, the institution justifies and documents the qualifications of its faculty." Standard 6.2.a also states that "Qualified, effective faculty members are essential to carry out the mission of the institution and to ensure the quality and integrity of its academic programs." Standard 6.2.c. further states, "The emphasis is on overall qualifications of a faculty member, rather than simply academic credentials. While academic credentials in most cases may well be the standard qualification for faculty members, other types of qualifications may prove to be appropriate." In addition, the Standard states "It is the institution's obligation to justify and document the qualifications of its faculty. Determining the acceptability of faculty qualifications requires judicious use of professional judgement, especially when persons do not hold degrees in the teaching discipline or are qualified based on criteria other than their academic credentials." The SACSCOC guidelines are given in Appendix A.

This policy describes the types of faculty assigned to a course, appropriate documentation, the credentials required to teach at the graduate and undergraduate levels, the types of credentials, and the process to document compliance.

Procedures

I. Faculty Credentials

- A. Instructor Types. A completed Faculty Hiring and Credentials form, shown in Appendix B, with official transcripts for each degree earned and any other documentation required or associated with the discipline that demonstrates experience or expertise (e.g. licensure, certification), must be in the faculty member's personnel file in order for the individual to teach as the instructor of record or to teach under the supervision of a regular faculty for any academic credit course (i.e. secondary instructor or GTA). This form and the documentation are typically completed during the hiring process but may be updated if teaching responsibilities change.
1. Instructor of Record. The instructor of record has full responsibility for all aspects of the development and delivery of the course, and determination of final grades for the students. The official instructor of record must be assigned for each academic credit course by the **first** day of classes of each term. Any exceptions must be approved by the Dean who must ensure that the instructor of record is assigned by the third day of class in each term.
 2. Secondary Instructor(s). In the case of multiple instructors being

1. Non-U.S. Institutions. Transcripts from non-U.S. institutions may need to be submitted to a professional transcript

2. Graduate and post-baccalaureate courses. The instructor of record must possess an “earned doctorate/terminal degree in the teaching discipline or a related discipline” and graduate faculty status, as recommended by the Graduate Council and approved by the Dean of Graduate Studies. The status must be valid for the entire semester/term in which the course is taught. The requirement of graduate faculty status applies to 400/500 level cross-listed courses and 500, 600, and 700 level courses.
 3. Graduate Teaching Assistants as Instructors of Record. GTAs may serve as instructors of record for undergraduate courses if they have a “master’s in the teaching discipline or at least “18 graduate semester hours in the teaching discipline” with “direct supervision by a faculty member experienced in the teaching discipline, regular in-service training, and planned and periodic evaluations.” For GTAs with 18 hours, documentation regarding their supervision, training and evaluation must be maintained for each semester with the appropriate College Dean or with the Dean of Graduate Studies. GTAs cannot serve as instructors of record for graduate level courses, regardless of qualifications.
 4. Alternative Certification through Commensurate Experience. An individual may be certified to teach courses at the undergraduate or graduate level based on commensurate experience in the same or related discipline. Professional certification, licensure, or documented record of professional practice may be utilized to evaluate commensurate experience. An individual credentialed to teach graduate courses based on experience in the field is also required to have a graduate degree, although that degree may be in a different field.
- D. Types of Credential. One of the following three types of credentials is required for a faculty member (full or part-time) or GTA to be listed as an instructor of record for a course.
1. Degrees. If a completed terminal or non-terminal graduate degree is utilized to justify the hire or course assignment(s), the courses to be assigned and the related degrees must be documented on the Faculty Hiring and Credentials form (Appendix B). Official transcript(s) must be kept in the faculty member’s personnel file as described in section B above.

Copies of transcripts are required as supporting documentation for the Faculty Hiring and Credentials form (Appendix B) when it is submitted the first time or if there are changes to the transcript that affect teaching responsibilities. In addition, the faculty

member must maintain graduate faculty status, as recommended by the Graduate Council and approved by the

audit course assignments each semester to verify faculty credentials, and generate the faculty roster based on those credentials as needed.

Review

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FACULTY CREDENTIALS

- Guidelines -

Standard 6.2.a (*Faculty qualifications*) of the *Principles of Accreditation* reads as follows:

For each of its educational programs, the institution justifies and documents the qualifications of its faculty members.

When an institution defines faculty qualifications using faculty credentials, institutions should use the following as credential