

UNIVERSITY of MONTEVALLO

Faculty Qualifications Guide

The University recognizes that qualified faculty members are essential to the quality and integrity of its academic programs and to support the mission and vision of the institution. The University is committed to ensuring its faculty are qualified to teach the curriculum within each academic program. SACSCOC Principles of Accreditation sets forth the basic standard that an institution should meet in order to ensure that the credentials of its faculty. Standard 6.2.a is as follows: For each of its educational programs, the institution justifies and documents the qualifications of its faculty members. (*Faculty qualifications*)

UM follows the faculty credentials guidelines provided by the Southern Association of College and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) for establishing faculty teaching credentials for the assigned instructor of record. The instructor of record is the individual assigned the overall responsibility for the development and implementation of the syllabus, the achievement of student learning outcomes included as part of the syllabus, and for issuing grades. The guidelines represent good practice for the academic credentials of faculty and are as follows:

“Faculty teaching **general education courses** at the undergraduate level: doctorate or master’s degree in the teaching discipline or master’s degree with a concentration in the teaching discipline (a minimum of 18 graduate semester hours in the teaching discipline).”

“Faculty teaching **baccalaureate courses**: doctorate or master’s degree in the teaching discipline or master’s degree with a concentration in the teaching discipline (minimum of 18 graduate semester hours in the teaching discipline).”

“Faculty teaching **graduate and post-baccalaureate course work**: earned doctorate/terminal degree in the teaching discipline or a related discipline.”

Alternate Qualifications

All faculty assigned to teach credit bearing courses are expected to meet the above guidelines. However, in some cases the overall qualifications of a faculty member may be considered in lieu of a degree, especially in disciplines that are considered professional, technical, technology-dependent, and/or emerging. These qualifications may include honors and awards indicating a unique knowledge of the discipline, documented related work or professional experiences in the field, professional licensure and certifications related to the assigned course(s), continuing professional development, relevant peer-reviewed publications and presented papers, or continuous documented excellence in teaching. The relationship between these qualifications and the course content and expected outcomes of the course(s) assigned must be clear and documented. Any faculty credentialed to teach graduate courses based on other qualifications is also required to have a graduate degree, although that degree may be in a different field.

Documentation of Credentials

Department chairs must document the credentials that qualify the instructor of record to teach the specific assigned course. It is the responsibility of a faculty member to provide evidence of teaching credentials. These include: official transcripts from domestic, accredited institutions; translated, evaluated, and certified foreign credentials (if applicable, see below), current curriculum vitae, and additional documentation necessary for establishing alternative qualifications (if applicable).

For all faculty hired after spring 2019, a completed Faculty Credentials Form (see Appendix B) with official transcripts for each degree earned and/or associated with the discipline, resume/curriculum vitae, and any documentation required to establish other qualifications must be in the faculty member’s personnel file in order for the individual to teach as the instructor of record. This form and the documentation must be completed during the hiring process but may be updated if teaching responsibilities change. For faculty hired

prior to spring 2019 the Faculty Credentials Form is not required, but may be added to their personnel file, especially as teaching responsibilities change. If additional information is needed, a request will be made to the chair and/or faculty member for information and may include a request for a completed Faculty Credentials Form. Faculty personnel files are housed in the Office of the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs for full-time faculty and in the appropriate dean's office for adjunct/part-time faculty.

Transcripts of faculty with degrees from institutions outside the U.S. must be submitted to an international educational consulting agency certified by the National Association of Credential Evaluation Services (NACES) for the purpose of translation and determining equivalency of the degree to that of a degree from a U.S. regionally accredited institution of higher education before being used in the credentialing process. Both the original transcript from the institution and the transcript evaluation are included in the faculty member's personnel file.

Completing the Faculty Roster Form

Faculty credential information will be summarized by department chairs for purposes of submission to SACSCOC on a Faculty Roster Form. Each faculty member's file containing the complete information required in the policy must be available upon request.

When summarizing faculty credentialing information for the purposes of submission to SACSCOC keep in mind that the Faculty Roster Form requires the following for each faculty member:

- 1) *Name* (Full-time or Part-Time)
 - a. Use Faculty member's full name as it appears in the current UM Bulletin.
 - b. Information must be provided for all faculty teaching in the terms that are part of a comprehensive review. This includes all credit-bearing courses, whenever and wherever offered. This includes courses delivered via BACHE or other consortia agreements, off-campus instructional sites, dual-enrollment, study abroad, dual degree, etc.
- 2) *Courses Taught* (Including Term, Course Number & Title, Credit Hours, Class type (Developmental, Undergraduate Non transferrable, Undergraduate Transferrable, Graduate)
 - a. Spring (year), Fall (year)
 - b. Include exact Prefix with course number (e.g. BIO 100) as listed in the current UM Bulletin.
 - c. Use complete course title; do not use abbreviations.
 - d. Information will be provided, separately from the roster, that summarizes the content of the courses listed on the roster.
- 3) *Academic Degrees & Coursework* (Relevant to Courses Taught, including Institution & Major, Specific Graduate Coursework, if needed)
 - a. List the earned academic degrees, diplomas, and certificates (with year completed) that help qualify the instructor to teach the listed courses. Indicate the discipline (concentration or major) of each degree and the institution that awarded the degree. Listing additional qualifications such as other specific course titles and number of semester hours awarded at the undergraduate or graduate level relevant to the courses assigned might also be helpful in building a case for qualified faculty.
- 4) *Other Qualifications and Comments* (Related to Courses Taught), if needed.
 - a. If necessary to establish alternate qualifications of faculty for courses assigned, list additional qualifications as indicated above and in the Faculty Credentials Policy.

It is expected that Department Chairs establish faculty qualifications maintain appropriate justification and documentation that establish qualifications in the files of all faculty. This includes the information needed regarding Academic Degrees and course work and Alternate Qualifications. For Faculty hired after spring 2019, this will also include the UM Faculty Credentials Form. This form may also be filled out and included for any other faculty member, especially if teaching assignments change. These files should be readily available for the completion of the Faculty Roster Form and for consideration of On-Site evaluators.

Example Faculty Roster Form

1	2	3	4
NAME (F,P)	COURSES TAUGHT Including Term, Course Number & Title, Credit Hours (D, UN, UT, G)	ACADEMIC DEGREES & COURSEWORK Relevant to Courses Taught, Including Institution & Major List specific graduate coursework, if needed	OTHER QUALIFICATIONS & COMMENTS Related to Courses Taught
Falcon, Freddie (P)	Fall 2019 AMS 151: Introduction to American Studies: Arts and Values, 3 (UT) AMS 155: Intro American Studies: World Nation & Region, 3, (UT) Spring 2020 HIST 101: Western Civilization, 3, (UT) AMS 275: Comics and American Culture, 3, (UT)	PHD American Studies (University of Alabama, 2010) MA History (University of Tennessee, 2007)	

F,P: Full-time or Part-time; D, UN, UT, G: Developmental, Undergraduate Nontransferable, Undergraduate Transferable, Graduate

Academic Disciplines Recognized

“SACSCOC usually accepts common collegiate practice in recognizing an academic discipline, concentration, and/or field of study. Examples include history, mathematics, chemistry, English, sociology, finance, accounting, marketing, and management. For faculty teaching in these areas, it is expected that the institution will provide information that justifies and documents each faculty member’s qualifications relevant to the specific courses they are assigned to teach. For faculty teaching interdisciplinary courses, it is expected that the institution will provide information that justifies and documents the faculty member’s qualifications relevant to the disciplines that are components of the course.”

SACSCOC also indicates that it may be that only one of the faculty member’s degrees need be cited in order to justify his/her qualifications to teach a specific course. In that case, cite only that one degree. In other cases, it will be necessary to list two or more degrees and to list the specific course titles and number of semester hours in those degrees relevant to the courses assigned. It may also be necessary to indicate alternative qualifications. Indicate the dates for these additional qualifications and clearly describe the relationship between these qualifications and the course content and/or expected outcomes of the courses assigned to the faculty member. (Source: SACSCOC, 2018)

Credentials must directly relate to the subject being taught. For faculty members who teach courses that are clearly and unequivocally within the discipline in which they earned their graduate degree(s) only a single set of credentials will be needed to cover their entire teaching assignment. However, those who teach a diverse repertoire of courses that are cross-disciplinary, interdisciplinary, or those who have drifted into different areas of interest or a different discipline than they studied in graduate school will require more documentation and/or explanation of their credentials. It is possible, for instance, that those teaching a four-course load of diverse or interdisciplinary courses could end up with four different sets of credentials and/or narrative justifications listed in the faculty roster, one for each course they teach.

Information about academic credentials must be clear, accurate, and correct.

In the event that SACSCOC reviewers request to examine faculty members' transcripts and compare them with our faculty rosters and other secondary documents they must not find any discrepancies or become confused or uncertain about the information they encounter. Do not reinterpret, simplify, or use terms

that you consider to be equivalent to what's stated on someone's credentials; report only what is actually recorded there.

Degrees are not interchangeable. For example, a Master of Arts in Political Science and a Master of Arts in Teaching with a concentration in political science, or a Master of Education with a certification in political science are three different degrees. They cannot simply be referred to as a master's in political science. Nor is saying "master's" or "doctorate" an adequate specification of a degree. The full degree title must be given, and the discipline(s) must be clearly and fully spelled out. "OC," for instance, does not adequately identify a discipline because it could equally well stand for organizational communication, organic chemistry, occupational counseling, or a half-dozen other subjects.

In addition, "UM" is not an acceptable institution identifier since it could equally well refer to the University of Mississippi as to the University of Montevallo. Nor would "Alabama" or "Auburn" be acceptable since they are not full names of institutions and do not clearly specify which of several similarly named institutions are being cited.

Credentials must directly relate to the subject being taught.

For faculty members who teach courses that are clearly and unequivocally within the discipline in which they earned their graduate degree(s), only a single set of credentials will be needed to cover their entire teaching assignment. However, those who teach a diverse repertoire of courses that cross disciplines, or those who have drifted into different areas of interest or a different discipline than they studied in graduate school may require more documentation and/or explanation of their credentials. It is possible, for instance, that those teaching a four-course load of diverse or interdisciplinary courses could end up with four sets of credentials and/or narrative justifications listed in the faculty roster, one for each course they teach.

Q: Is it necessary to list all of a faculty member's degrees in a faculty roster?

No, only those that establish the faculty member's credentials for the courses she/he is teaching this semester. Their highest degree should be listed but, if that degree is not in the discipline she/he is currently teaching, other lower level degrees in more relevant disciplines should also be listed. For instance, if a faculty member with an Ed.D. in higher education administration teaches a school counseling course, the doctorate alone would not be an adequate credential. But, what would be appropriate and highly desirable would be adding that she/he has an M.Ed. or an M.A. or an M.S. or an M.S.W. in counseling or merely specifying that she/he had also completed a certain number of graduate hours in counseling or clinical psychology or mental health practice as part of her/his doctoral study.

Q: What are the guidelines for deciding whether a faculty member's degree and the courses he/she is teaching are within the same discipline or a justification needs to be written because they're in different disciplines?

SACSCOC expects institutions to follow the commonly accepted standards and practices of each discipline they teach. When in doubt, provide additional information. For example, the Ph.D. in history of a faculty member teaching a survey course in Russian history may **not** adequately demonstrate his credentials for teaching the course. In this case, it would also be necessary to cite his total credit hours earned in Russian history or other relevant areas, his research and/or publications related to this topic, other expertise enhancing activities, and/or his previous successful experience teaching this course (see Alternative Qualifications section of UM Faculty Credentialing Policy and the Faculty Credentialing Form).

Ultimately, department chairs have to use their best judgment in deciding which courses in their departments are so specialized that they require a special degree or other justification for the faculty members teaching them. But, at the very least, they should assume that any time the prefix of a course being taught differs from the prefix of the degree held by the instructor, some justification will be required.

Q: Several of our introductory courses are taught by faculty members with doctorates in what some people may see as a different discipline. Does each one have to be individually justified? Won't a single explanation suffice for all of them?

SACSCOC expects a clear identification and/or explanation of each faculty member's qualifications for teaching each course he/she is assigned. And, since it's possible that some reviewers will spot-check credentials rather than read through the entire faculty roster from beginning to end, it's important that each faculty member's entry be complete and stand on its own without assuming that the reader has seen and remembered an explanation from a previous entry. However, this does not mean that each justification has to be unique. Boilerplate statements can be developed and reused as a justification for several different faculty members.

For instance, the following statement could be utilized for any number of faculty members with physics degrees who teach multiple sections of the basic astronomy course.

“The overlap of physics and astronomy is evident in the large number of institutions, including the University of Montevallo, where a single department houses both disciplines. In introductory astronomy courses at the 100-level, about ninety percent of the course content is physics and history of science while the rest of it is the names and characteristics of the stars and specific applications of physical principles. There is, therefore, a long-standing practice that dates back at least 25 years at the University of Montevallo and far longer at other institutions of having faculty with doctoral degrees in physics teach these courses.”

Generic justifications could also be developed for faculty members with political science degrees teaching public administration or criminal justice courses, for faculty members with biology degrees teaching

environmental science courses, or for any number of other common cross-disciplinary or cross-specialization teaching assignments.

Q: If a faculty member's degree is in a different field than the courses he's teaching, is it enough to say he took a concentration of coursework in that field or is more justification needed?

If a graduate degree has not been awarded in the teaching field but the faculty member has taken coursework in that field, SACSCOC wants a specific statement of the actual number of graduate hours completed and the name of the discipline or specialty in which they were taken, not just a vague statement about a concentration of coursework. For example, a faculty member teaching a Communication Law course that is cross-listed as both a communication course and a political science course might have the following statement in the "Academic Degrees & Coursework" column of the faculty roster (see example above).

PHD

Mass Communication (University of Alabama, 2000)

MC 500 U.S. Constitutional Law (3 Hrs)

MC 505 Communication Law (3 Hrs)

MC 600 Advanced Topics in First Amendment Issues (3 Hrs)

MC 605 Mass Media Law and Regulation (3 Hrs)

MC 610 Social Responsibility of the Mass Media (3 Hrs)

MC 615 Political Communication (3 Hrs)

MC 620 Lobbying (3 Hrs)

Total: 21 Graduate Hours relevant to Communication Law (3 Hrs)

Q: If an instructor's master's degree is in a different discipline than she is teaching, but she's currently enrolled in a doctoral program in the teaching discipline, is this acceptable?

It depends on how far she has progressed in her program. As noted above, if a graduate degree has not yet been earned in the teaching field, SACSCOC wants a specific statement of how many graduate hours have been completed and the specific discipline in which they were earned, not just a vague claim that the person is enrolled in a degree program. The narrative should include the title of the degree being sought, the institution at which it is being pursued, list of courses completed, and the total number of hours that have been completed at this point.

Q: If a course is cross-listed in two disciplines, does the faculty member teaching it have to have qualifications in both disciplines, or will one suffice?

In SACSCOC's eyes, what you refer to as "a cross-listed course" is actually two different courses, one in each of two different disciplines, that just happen to meet simultaneously and be taught by the same person. Each of these courses must stand on its own academic merit, and each must have an instructor who is fully qualified within the context of the discipline in which it is offered. Thus, the faculty member must be qualified to teach in both disciplines.

However, the faculty member need not be qualified in exactly the same way or to the same degree in both disciplines. It is not necessary, for instance, to have two degrees or even two concentrations of graduate coursework. It's possible that the person's qualifications for teaching in one discipline may be based on a graduate degree while the qualifications for the second discipline may be based on independent research and scholarship.

Q: Would an officer of a corporation be qualified to teach business courses?

Depending upon the course they are asked to teach and how well their background fits it, such people may be qualified in SACSCOC's eyes, but the vague, general statement about their backgrounds that was

included in the question doesn't provide enough information to make a decision. Simply saying someone has "senior level corporate experience" or "has owned and operated their own business for several years" isn't enough. SACSCOC wants to know more about the exact types of experiences they have had, what they actually did and for how long they did it. It will also want to know what their job title was/is, the name and location of the company/organization where they gained this experience, the ways in which this work experience is directly connected to the content and SLOs of course being taught. Documentation of this work experience is needed. A letter of reference from someone at the company outlining job duties is ideal as those job duties can then be connected to the course content and SLOs. The more closely their background matches the content and focus of the course(s) they are teaching, the more likely it is that SACSCOC will consider them appropriately qualified.

Someone who has spent ten years managing a mid-sized retail grocery store may not be qualified to teach an industrial manufacturing course but could be very qualified to teach an introduction to business course, a business planning course, or a basic management course. Similarly, a CPA who would be well-qualified to teach a finance course or a taxation course, might not be qualified to teach a human resources course or a sales management course.

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