



AA: 001 – Faculty Credentials

Purpose: This policy sets forth the standards for faculty credentials at the University of Montevallo. 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.

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Division: Academic Affairs

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Policy Owner: SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison

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Academic Credentials

The University of Montevallo follows the 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 for each course. 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 in a credit bearing course. These guidelines represent best practice for the academic credentials of faculty and are as follows:

- “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.
- **Graduate teaching assistants**: master’s in the teaching discipline or 18 graduate semester hours in the teaching discipline, direct supervision by a faculty member experienced in the teaching discipline, regular in-service training, and planned and periodic evaluations.” Graduate teaching assistants are limited to only teaching undergraduate courses unless they possess an earned terminal degree in the teaching discipline as described above.

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, clinical, technical, technology-dependent, and/or emerging.

Documentation for alternate qualifications may include: honors and awards indicating a unique knowledge of the discipline, externally validated 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. The relationship between alternate qualifications and the course content and each of the expected student learning outcomes of the course(s) assigned must be clear and documented. Any faculty credentialed to teach graduate level courses based on alternate qualifications is also required to have an earned doctorate/terminal degree, although that degree may be in a related field.

The University recognizes that there are some particular types of courses commonly and appropriately

assigned to faculty with alternate qualifications.

- For master level clinical practicums or internships, a master's degree and externally validated related work or professional experiences in the field, professional licensure, and certifications related to each of the student learning outcomes and content of the assigned course(s) are clear and adequate alternate qualifications.
- For undergraduate one-hour activity courses, a baccalaureate degree along with appropriate, externally validated alternate qualifications related to each of the student learning outcomes and content of the assigned course(s) are clear and adequate alternate qualifications.
- For undergraduate interdisciplinary courses, exploratory courses, and some co-taught courses (often, but not limited to courses in interdisciplinary programs such as the Honors Program, Environmental Studies, Peace and Justice Studies, and Game Studies and Design) in which the content includes the intersection of various topics, emerging topics, research areas, and/or professional areas, it is understood that there may be limited graduate programs, degrees, or courses available; in such cases, a doctorate/terminal degree or master's degree along with documented alternate qualifications related to the student learning outcomes and content of the assigned course(s) are acceptable qualifications.
- For the First-Year Seminar course, a master's degree in any discipline plus a minimum of one year of employment as a full-time staff or full-time faculty member teaching at the undergraduate level at the University are acceptable qualifications.

Documentation of Credentials

Faculty Credentials Form

It is the responsibility of the department chair to identify, justify, and report the credentials that qualify the instructor of record to teach the specific assigned course at the time of hire by completing the Faculty Credentials Form for approval by the college dean and Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Justifications for these teaching assignments and evidence of qualifications as documented on the form must be reviewed each term as instructors of record are assigned and updated as needed by the department chair. Completed faculty credential forms 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.

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 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 if 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.

Graduate Teaching Assistant Credentials Certification

It is the responsibility of the department chair to identify, justify, and report the credentials that qualify a graduate teaching assistant (GTA) to be the instructor of record for a specific undergraduate course at the beginning of each term by completing the Graduate Teaching Assistant Credentials Certification form for approval by the college dean and Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs. Justifications for these teaching assignments and evidence of qualifications as documented on the form must be reviewed each term a

graduate teaching assistant is assigned as instructor of record. Completed Graduate Teaching Assistant Credentials Certification forms are housed in the appropriate dean's office for adjunct/part-time faculty. See further requirements for GTA below.

It is the responsibility of the GTA 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).

International Degrees

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.

Graduate Teaching Assistants

As articulated in the mission, UM provides "a 'small college' public higher educational experience of high quality." Thus, providing an exemplary educational experience is at the core of UM's priorities. In keeping with the mission, the purpose of the GTA experience is to provide graduate students with training and support as they learn to engage students in the classroom effectively. GTAs can acquire the skills necessary to provide a high-quality classroom experience as they prepare for careers in higher education. To that end, the GTA experience is designed for graduate student growth and professional development.

Eligibility

GTAs must be in their second year of graduate study with at least 18 credits of graduate coursework in the field of study to begin teaching.

GTAs must take (earning at least a "B") a specially designated 500-level Approaches to Pedagogy course in their field of study before teaching. This course will count toward the credit hours for their graduate degree.

To apply, students should submit a one-page statement of purpose and an application form. Students will be accepted for the GTA program based on demonstrated academic strengths, leadership potential, classroom comfort, and openness to professional development.

In-service training and evaluation for GTAs

While teaching courses, the GTA will be required to take a 500-level teaching development course. Additionally, during the term(s) that a GTA teaches, a highly qualified, full-time faculty mentor will observe several class meetings and provide substantial feedback, coaching, and mentoring through both one-on-one meetings and formalized written reports documenting the observations and providing feedback from student evaluations. GTAs continued teaching assignments in the second semester will be contingent upon satisfactory performance and evaluations by their faculty mentor. GTAs will be further mentored by the Graduate Program Coordinator, who also serves as their academic advisor.

Reappointment

GTA appointments are made for the Fall/Spring term and may be reevaluated between terms. Reappointment for a second academic year is not guaranteed, but a GTA who is making satisfactory progress towards a graduate degree and whose teaching meets the expectations of the supervising faculty and administration may be considered for reappointment. Priority will be given to those with superior academic and teaching qualifications.

Responsible Parties

Search Committee Chairs, Department Chairs, Deans, Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs, SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison.

Review of Policy

The SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison and Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs will review this policy and make any recommendations for changes to the President at least once every 5 years.