FACULTY CREDENTIALS OVERVIEW

A Self-Guided Training

Last Updated: Spring 2023

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CONTENT OVERVIEW

The following presentation is an overview of the Faculty Credentialing process here at USC. This presentation is meant for HR contacts and those responsible for the coordination of collecting faculty credentials for each of the Colleges and Schools.

Additional information about the faculty credentialing process can be found at:

- OIRAA Faculty Credentialing Webpage
- ACAF 1.20 Policy
- SACSCOC Instructor Qualifications Guidelines

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WHO CAN I CONTACT REGARDING FACULTY CREDENTIALING INFORMATION?

- Alexis McCoy is the Program Coordinator in the Office of Institutional Research, Assessment and Analytics (OIRAA) that primarily handles Faculty Credentialing for the Columbia campus and Palmetto College campuses.

- If you have any questions, concerns, or needs related to Faculty Credentialing she can be reached at mccoyja2@mailbox.sc.edu.

- And a short staff bio can be found here!

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WHY COLLECT FACULTY CREDENTIALS?

The main reason we collect Faculty Credentials is for our SACSCOC accreditation needs. For each of our educational programs, USC must justify and document the qualifications of our faculty members, regardless of their title or status.

If someone is listed as the Instructor of Record (IOR) for a course, even if they are a graduate student or affiliate, we must have their credentials on file and credentials must be collected at the time of their hire.

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BUT THERE ARE OTHER REASONS

Of course, it is important to remain in compliance with our accreditation needs, but there are other important reasons why USC as an institution collects and houses faculty credentials.

Having faculty credentials on file:

- Provides for a collection of faculty data in one location.
- Streamlines review process for administration.
- Establishes a database of faculty education and experience.
- Identifies strengths and gaps in faculty hiring.
- Promotes communication, staff empowerment and facilitates collaboration, networking, and outreach across the University.
- Fosters a culture of quality and integrity.
- Decrease risks and liability for the University.

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WHERE ARE THE CREDENTIALS KEPT?

All credentials are housed in the Compliance Assist system and maintained by the HR contacts of the Colleges and Schools and the Office of Institutional Research, Assessment, and Analytics (OIRAA).

To log on to Compliance Assist visit https://sc.compliance-assist.com/.

If you need access to Compliance Assist, please email Alexis McCoy at mccoyja2@mailbox.sc.edu.

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YOUR ROLE AS AN HR CONTACT

As an HR Contact you are your colleges or schools first point of contact for the coordination of collecting credentials.

Alexis will reach out multiple times a semester and let you know what instructors in your college or school are missing credentials.

Your responsibility after receiving these lists is to collect and upload transcripts, forms, and other important documentation into Compliance Assist. Consult your supervisor for your college or school's specific processes for gathering these materials.

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HOW DO I UPLOAD CREDENTIALS

Step-by-step guides on how to upload academic transcripts and additional credentialing documentation can be found on the OIRAA website.

- How to upload academic transcripts
- How to upload additional credentialing documentation

When making **any** changes to Compliance Assist be sure to **select the OIRAA Review** condition under Attributes.

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COMMUNICATION TO EXPECT FROM OIRAA

- Early Semester:
  - OIRAA to send out the expected timeline for the semester.
  - OIRAA to send out the list of new faculty members added to Compliance Assist.

- Things to do:
  - Ask any questions you may have.
  - Provide updates, if any, about previous semesters outstanding faculty credentials.
  - Once you receive the list of names of new instructors for your college or school upload any information you have on file (transcripts, certifications, licenses, etc.) to their faculty profile in Compliance Assist.

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COMMUNICATION TO EXPECT FROM OIRAA

- Mid Semester and Late Semester:
  - OIRAA to send out first Matching Report of faculty missing credentials.
  - OIRAA to send out second Matching Report of still outstanding faculty members missing credentials with a reminder of the deadline.

- Things to do:
  - Obtain and upload documentation detailed in the Matching Report to the correct faculty profiles in Compliance Assist.
  - Follow up with OIRAA about any updates or difficulties obtaining credentials.

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WHAT IS A MATCHING REPORT?

The Matching Report shows faculty members who are possibly missing credentials.

- Every course taught at USC has a list of education requirements needed for an instructor to be considered credentialed to teach the course.

- Degree information that has been added to an instructor's profile in Compliance Assist is then compared to these course requirements and if they do not "match" the instructor is placed on the Matching Report.

WHAT DOES A MATCHING REPORT LOOK LIKE?

- The Matching Report is an excel document that includes the following:
  - Name of instructor missing credentials
  - Instructors Faculty ID
  - Course the instructor is missing credentials for
  - Department the course falls under
  - Instructors position title
  - Notes of which items are missing for them to be considered credentialed

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MATCHING REPORT EXAMPLE

Faculty_ID	name	Course_Sub	Course_Nu	Course_Name	Course_College	Course_Department	Position	Notes
000000001	John Smith	EXAMPLE	101	Intro to Faculty Credentialing	University of South Carolir	Office of Institutional Research,	Instructor	Missing educational information; please upload transcripts
000000002	Mike Jones	EXAMPLE	101	Intro to Faculty Credentialing	University of South Carolir	Office of Institutional Research,	Assistant Professor	Missing educational information; please upload transcripts
000000003	Sarah Miles	EXAMPLE	301	Faculty Credentialing and You	University of South Carolir	Office of Institutional Research,	Senior Instructor	Degree information in different field, need alternative credentials for EXAM 301
000000003	Sarah Miles	EXAMPLE	305	How to Create Alternative Credentials Forms	University of South Carolir	Office of Institutional Research,	Senior Instructor	Degree information in different field, need alternative credentials for EXAM 305
000000005	Jonathan Lude	EXAMPLE	101	Intro to Faculty Credentialing	University of South Carolir	Office of Institutional Research,	Graduate Teaching As	Missing educational information; please upload transcript and if not masters degree or higher will need GTA form
000000006	Kimberly Page	EXAMPLE	305	How to Create Alternative Credentials Forms	University of South Carolir	Office of Institutional Research,	Associate Professor	Missing educational information; please upload transcripts
000000007	Tommy Tueber	EXAMPLE	305	How to Create Alternative Credentials Forms	University of South Carolir	Office of Institutional Research,	Instructor	Degree information in different field, need alternative credentials for EXAM 305
000000008	La Quanda Small	EXAMPLE	101	Intro to Faculty Credentialing	University of South Carolir	Office of Institutional Research,	Lecturer	Missing educational information; please upload transcripts
000000009	Rachel Greenwell	EXAMPLE	301	Faculty Credentialing and You	University of South Carolir	Office of Institutional Research,	Lecturer	Degree information in different field, need alternative credentials for
000000010	Sophie Foster	EXAMPLE	301	Faculty Credentialing and You	University of South Carolir	Office of Institutional Research,	Graduate Teaching As	Missing GTA form for EXAMPLE 301; please upload
000000011	Michael Yang	EXAMPLE	101	Intro to Faculty Credentialing	University of South Carolir	Office of Institutional Research,	Adjunct	Missing educational information; please upload transcripts
000000011	Michael Yang	EXAMPLE	101	Intro to Faculty Credentialing	University of South Carolir	Office of Institutional Research,	Adjunct	Missing educational information; please upload transcripts

Information is for example purposes only. The information you would receive would be specific to the instructors at your College/School.

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WHY DID MY INSTRUCTORS END UP ON THE MATCHING REPORT?

The minimum qualifications an instructor must have to teach at the University of South Carolina are as follows:

- **To teach at the undergraduate level:**
  - Master's degree in <u>the teaching discipline</u>
  - 18 graduate credit hours <u>in the teaching discipline</u> accompanied by a master's degree in another discipline

- **To teach at the graduate level:**
  - Terminal degree <u>in the teaching discipline</u>
  - Terminal degree <u>in a related discipline</u>

Credentials are checked on a course-by-course basis. If an instructor does not meet the minimum qualifications assigned for a course based on the documentation on file for them in Compliance Assist, they will be listed on the report.

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COMMON DOCUMENTATION TO HAVE ON FILE

The main reason an instructor is listed as missing credentials is not because they are unqualified to teach, but instead because we are missing documentation of their qualifications.

Here are some examples of common documentation that is gathered and uploaded for instructors to show their qualifications.

- Official transcript showing a conferred degree
- Official transcript showing additional relevant graduate coursework
- Proof of any certifications or licenses
- A foreign transcript evaluation
    - *If degree is from an institution outside of the US*
- Additional credentialing documentation:
    - Alternative Credentials forms
    - Graduate Teaching Assistant forms
    - Graduate Coursework forms
    - Memos, etc.

An instructor's earned degree should always be the first step towards credentialing.

Only when their education does not meet the minimum qualifications should we obtain additional credentialing documentation.

For additional credentialing documentation, OIRAA will describe what documentation is still needed for the instructor to be credentialed. This information will be detailed on the Matching Reports that are sent out twice a semester.

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WHAT DO I DO IF AN INSTRUCTOR DOES NOT MEET MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS?

- If an instructor does not have the minimum academic qualifications but instead has been hired based on their professional experience, an Alternative Credentials form will need to be submitted for each course the instructor is teaching.

- An Alternative Credentials form is used to showcase an instructors
  - Research
  - Work experience
  - Certifications or licenses
  - Any experience that makes an instructor uniquely qualified to teach

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AN ALTERNATIVE CREDENTIALS FORM || PART ONE:

An alternative credentials form includes two important parts, a course description and a summary of the instructor's alternative credentials.

The Course Description:

- As the name suggests this is a brief description of the course.
- The description can come from the bulletin.
- If the course is a "Topics" course or a course where content changes from semester-to -semester describe what that specific course section is about.
- Can include learning outcomes to help justify credentials, but it is not required.

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ALTERNATIVE CREDENTIALS || PART TWO:

Alternative Credentials and Related Content:

- This is the area where you will describe the instructor's alternative credentials.

- It is best practice to have credentials written in a simple narrative format that shows an instructor's experience and how it relates to the course content described in the Course Description box.

- Credentials should be explained so that someone with no experience in the field can understand.

** All forms submitted for credentialing purposes must be signed off by two administrators in your college of school. Examples of signature options can be found on the forms.**

THE MATCHING REPORT SAYS AN INSTRUCTOR IS TEACHING A COURSE, BUT THEY ARE NOT

- Sometimes an instructor will be incorrectly assigned to a course. This could be as simple as a clerical error or maybe they were assigned as a placeholder before the semester began and the course was never updated to the correct instructor.

- In any case, we need to update who the Instructor of Record is for the course.

- Try to find out who the correct instructor is and reach out to Alexis to let her know the instructor is incorrect and needs to be changed.

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WE JUST HIRED A NEW FACULTY MEMBER, AND THEY DON'T HAVE A PROFILE IN COMPLIANCE ASSIST YET

- OIRAA uploads new faculty who were not previously in the Compliance Assist system **twice a semester**.

- Typically, if a faculty member is not in the system yet they will be included on the next upload.

- If it is a priority to get a faculty members credentials on file, Alexis can add a profile for them manually. Reach out to her and provide the following information:
    - ➤ First and Last Name
    - ➤ Position Title
    - ➤ Department
    - ➤ Faculty ID

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WHAT ABOUT GRADUATE STUDENTS?

Qualifications for GTA's to teach **Undergraduate** Courses:

- An official transcript showing a conferred Masters degree in the teaching discipline

OR

- 18+ graduate credits in the teaching discipline shown on a transcript

    USC grad students can use an unofficial advising transcript to show 18+ hours

- GTA form on file for each course confirming:

    - Direct supervision by a faculty member who is qualified to teach
    - In-service training (i.e.: courses taken simultaneously or prior to teaching)
    - GTA being subject to periodic evaluations by a faculty member in the discipline
    - Confirmation of no conflict of interest

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WHAT IF A GTA IS TEACHING A GRADUATE COURSE?

- First things first, we need to confirm that the GTA is correctly listed as the Instructor of Record (IOR).
  - The IOR is responsible for developing course content, assignments, and grades. If that's not the grad student, the incorrect instructor is listed.
  - If the incorrect instructor is listed, please let OIRAA know who is the correct instructor so that their information can be updated in Compliance Assist.
  - Most of the time this solves the credentialing issue, and the correct instructor has the necessary credentials already on file.

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MY GTA IS THE CORRECT INSTRUCTOR FOR THIS GRADUATE COURSE, WHAT DO I DO?

- Any GTA listed as the Instructor of Record for a graduate level or mixed-level course **must be approved by the Office of the Provost.**

- All requests for approval must be made through the portal on the OIRAA website.
    - Please allow two weeks for your request to be processed.
    - OIRAA will reach out if your request has been approved or if not, will alert you of next steps

- The sooner the request can be made the better. If you know a GTA is going to be teaching a graduate level course, you can submit the request as soon as you know. Otherwise, it will be listed on the Matching Report.

The portal can be found here.

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WHAT OTHER CREDENTIALING ITEMS REQUIRE PROVOST APPROVAL?

Detailed in the ACAF 1.20 Policy the following exception requests can be submitted for Provost Approval.

- Graduate Teaching Assistants teaching a graduate/mixed level course
- Alternative Credentialing below the **absolute minimum**
- Adding non-standard course requirements

For more information regarding these exceptions please refer to the ACAF 1.20 policy and the OIRAA webpage here.

The submission of an exception request does not guarantee approval.

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WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN GRADUATE TEACHING ASSISTANT FORMS AND GRADUATE COURSEWORK FORMS?

- **Graduate Teaching Assistant forms** are used to detail which courses GTA's are teaching and their ability to teach those courses

- **Graduate Coursework forms** are used when an instructor for an undergraduate course holds a degree outside of the teaching discipline for a course but has completed at least 18 credit hours of relevant graduate coursework
  - Example: Instructor holds a degree in Biology but has 18 hours of Chemistry coursework. They would be able to teach both BIOL and CHEM courses.
  - This form is used to show those 18 hours in CHEM
  - This form can be used for all instructors, not just GTA's

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WHAT IF AN INSTRUCTOR OBTAINED A DEGREE OUTSIDE OF THE UNITED STATES?

Every degree an instructor has obtained outside of the United States is required to have a foreign credential evaluation on file, which is completed by a third-party evaluation service.

The University has multiple evaluation services that you can choose from, but OIRAA's recommendation is World Education Services (WES). A guide on how to request an evaluation from WES can be found here.

> *If using WES, make sure that whoever is completing the evaluation includes the **University of South Carolina- Graduate School** as a recipient so that we can obtain a copy of their evaluation.*

If you do not wish to use World Education Services a full list of University approved evaluation services can be found here.

OIRAA is not responsible for any cost associated with requesting an evaluation.

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DO I NEED AN EVALUATION IF THE TRANSCRIPT IS IN ENGLISH?

Yes. The purpose of obtaining and having a foreign credential evaluation on file is to ensure that any conferred degree obtained in another country would be equivalent to a degree obtained in the United States.

For example, some countries have 10-point GPA scales while the scale in the United States is on a 4-point scale. The foreign credential evaluation will look at credentials obtained by an instructor and let us know the correct US equivalent.

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FINAL THOUGHTS AND IMPORTANT STEPS TO REMEMBER

- When uploading credentials to Compliance Assist remember to **select the OIRAA Review attribute**.

- All credentialing forms **must** have two signatures from administrators in the College or School.
  - 1st signature options: Program Director, Chair, or Associate Dean
  - 2nd signature options: Associate Dean or Dean

- Please let Alexis McCoy know of any questions, feedback, or updates as they relate to the credentialing process.

- If you would like to meet via TEAMS for a demonstration or to discuss any part of the process, please reach out to Alexis to set up a time to meet.

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THANKS!

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