

NUMBER: ACAF 1.20 (NEW)  
SECTION: Academic Affairs  
SUBJECT: Credential Verification for Instructors of Record  
DATE: May 11, 2015  
Policy for: All Campuses  
Procedure for: All Campuses  
Authorized by: Helen Doerpinghaus  
Issued by: Office of the Provost

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## I. Policy

The University of South Carolina is committed to recruiting, retaining, and promoting an outstanding faculty who demonstrate excellence in teaching, research, service, and outreach.

To ensure compliance with accreditation requirements regarding teaching faculty, the teaching credentials of all instructors of record must be systematically reviewed by the hiring authority at the time of hire and must meet all credential requirements of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). Additionally, credentials must be reviewed when an instructor of record is assigned to a course he or she has not previously taught.

The credentials of all instructors of record must be verified in accordance with this policy and its accompanying procedures.

### A. Definitions

#### 1. Campus Chief Academic Officer

The term "campus chief academic officer" is used throughout this policy and defined for each campus as follows:

- a. For the Columbia campus, the campus chief academic officer is the executive vice president for academic affairs and provost.
- b. For the Palmetto College campuses, the campus chief academic officer is the chancellor.
- c. For the comprehensive campuses, the campus chief academic officer is the executive/senior vice chancellor for academic affairs unless otherwise specified by the chancellor.

## 2. Instructor of Record

The University of South Carolina defines the instructor of record as the individual designated by the academic unit as responsible for the course, including developing its content, assignments, and grades.

This policy applies to all faculty and other academic personnel involved in instruction as defined by University Policy ACAF 1.06 Academic Titles for Faculty and Unclassified Academic Staff Positions. This also includes university staff assigned as instructors of record either as dual employment or as part of their staff appointment, and academic affiliates appointed in accordance with University Policy UNIV 2.50 Affiliate Appointments.

Additionally, this policy applies to academic administrators with academic appointments as defined by University Policy ACAF 1.01 Recruitment and Appointment of Academic Administrators. Examples of related positions include the provost, vice provosts, academic deans and associate deans, academic department chairs and academic program directors.

All instructors of record regardless of rank or type must meet the appropriate standards for credentials.

## 3. Course Department

The term “course department” is used throughout this policy to refer to the college, school, department, or program responsible for the oversight of a course and for the assignment of the instructor of record for the course. The “course department” is the college, school, department, or program in which a course originates.

## 4. Official Transcript

An official transcript must be printed on the institution’s official letterhead or transcript stationary, and include the name, official seal, and watermark or other identifier of the issuing institution; include the signature of the appropriate authorizing agent (usually the Registrar) and date of issue; and, list the type of degree, area of concentration, and date the degree was conferred (if the degree has been awarded).

Electronic transcripts are acceptable as long as these are received from the university granting the degree, or through a third party that is authorized to broker such transactions and that takes the responsibility for verifying the identities of both the issuing institution and the receiving institution.

## B. Policy Oversight

On each campus, the chief academic officer is responsible for ensuring that each course department verifies the academic credentials of all instructors of record. The course department is responsible for documenting the credentials of the instructor of record, and keeping the documentation on file.

## C. Credential Verification

### 1. Criteria for Credential Verification

Credential review on all campuses must be in accordance with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges' Comprehensive Standard 3.7.1 of *The Principles of Accreditation*.

The criteria specify that when determining acceptable qualifications of its faculty, an institution should give primary consideration to the highest earned degree in the discipline. The minimum requirements for instructors of record are:

- a. Faculty teaching 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)
- b. Faculty teaching graduate and post-baccalaureate course work: earned doctorate/terminal degree in the teaching discipline or a related discipline
- c. Graduate teaching assistants: To be eligible to teach, each graduate teaching assistant must provide an official transcript showing that a master's degree in the teaching discipline has been conferred. Otherwise, graduate students must meet all of the following qualifications before they are eligible to teach: 1) 18 or more graduate semester hours in the teaching discipline as evidenced by coursework on a transcript, 2) direct supervision by a faculty member who is qualified to teach in the discipline, 3) regular in-service training, which may be in the form of a course taken simultaneously or prior to teaching, and 4) planned and periodic evaluations by a faculty member in the discipline. Departments wishing to appoint graduate students with fewer than 18 completed graduate hours as instructors of record should maintain and submit documentation demonstrating additional credentials that qualify the individual for instruction.

### 2. Alternative Credentialing

When the credentials of the instructor of record do not meet the minimum requirements as outlined above, but the prospective instructor possesses

outstanding professional experience or demonstrated contributions to the teaching discipline, the individual may be alternatively credentialed.

In cases of alternative credentialing, the course department should normatively explain and provide documentation of the instructor's alternate qualification(s) to teach a course or courses. These may include, but are not limited to, work or research experience, professional licensure or certification, non-credit professional development courses, or other specialized training. Sufficient objective documentation to support outstanding experience and demonstrated contributions are required to warrant consideration and must be kept up to date and maintained by the course department as long as the individual is in an active teaching role within the department.

3. Required Review at Time of Hire or Appointment

Verification of required credentials as described in section I.C.1. must occur at time of hire for all new instructors of record. In the case of academic affiliates, credentials must be reviewed at the time of appointment.

4. Required Review for New Class Assignment

Verification of required credentials as described in section I.C.1. must occur when an established instructor of record is assigned to teach a class not previously taught by the individual. This includes classes both within and outside the instructor's normal teaching discipline.

5. Per-Course Review Requirement

Credential verification for eligibility to teach a course must be considered on a per-course basis regardless of the instructor's full- or part-time standing. It is possible that the highest earned degree in a discipline may be sufficient to credential an instructor for the majority of his or her classes, while alternative credentialing, as described in section I.C.2., may be necessary for a particular class outside the discipline.

6. Joint Appointment Status

If an individual will be serving as the instructor of record for more than one academic unit or campus, his or her eligibility and credentialing should be reviewed and processed by course for each academic unit or campus as if the instructor were not working for the University in any other capacity.

7. ROTC Instructors

ROTC instructors are provided to the university through the military. The university provides them with courtesy appointments and credentials their

instruction provided they have a master's degree or higher, have completed appropriate military programs, or have accumulated substantial and relevant experience. As with other instructors of record, credentials for ROTC instructors must be submitted upon appointment.

## 8. Credential Documents

Each instructor of record must have an official transcript and curriculum vitae on file with the course department(s) for which he or she is teaching. Instructors of record who are alternatively credentialed, and do not have relevant coursework in the teaching discipline, still must submit a curriculum vitae along with their other supporting materials. Credential documentation for each instructor of record must be maintained by the course department for as long as the individual is in an active teaching role.

- a. Official Transcripts: An individual's credentials should include copies of official transcripts showing all relevant conferred degrees and coursework. If an official transcript is obtained prior to a degree being awarded, a second official transcript must be requested and submitted after the degree is conferred.

Official transcripts must be sent from the issuing institution directly to the instructor's department chair, college or school dean, program director, or other appointed individual within the department, college, school, or program. Electronic transcripts, as outlined in section I.A.4., may be sent from a third party authorized to broker such transactions. A transcript sent directly to an instructor from an issuing institution is acceptable if the transcript is delivered to the instructor's department, college, school, or program in an envelope addressed and sealed by the issuing institution. The department, college, school, or program must keep a record of the receipt of the transcript in the instructor's file to prove that the transcript was received directly from the issuing institution, delivered by the instructor in an envelope addressed and sealed by the issuing institution, or through an authorized third party.

Graduate teaching assistants who do not hold a master's degree in the teaching discipline, and who are currently enrolled at the University of South Carolina, may submit an unofficial transcript (i.e., advising transcript) showing the completion of 18+ hours in the teaching discipline. If a teaching assistant graduates and is re-hired as an instructor, an official University of South Carolina transcript showing the conferred degree must be requested.

- b. Curriculum Vitae: A complete, up-to-date curriculum vitae must be on file for all instructors of record. This requirement includes Graduate Teaching Assistants, professional staff who teach credit-bearing courses, adjuncts,

and individuals not employed by the University of South Carolina who are listed as instructors of record.

- c. Alternative Credentialing Documents: When the assignment of an instructor of record is justified by means other than those outlined in I.C.1., supporting documentation is needed to explain the instructor's qualifications to teach the course. Documentation should be periodically reviewed and kept up to date for as long as the instructor is teaching the course for which he or she is being alternatively credentialed.
- d. Foreign Credentials: All transcripts submitted from foreign universities or schools must be evaluated for equivalency to United States accredited coursework by a University-accepted foreign credential evaluator. The transcript and other applicable academic records should be accompanied by a notarized translation, if not in English. If a transcript is not available, the foreign credential evaluator may evaluate the instructor's foreign credentials for equivalence to a U.S. degree.

## II. Procedures

### A. Responsibility for Implementation

- 1. On the Columbia campus, the Provost delegates responsibility for implementation of this policy, including credential verification, to the Columbia campus college and school deans. In cases where a course is offered by a department outside the purview of the college and school deans, responsibility for implementation and credential verification is delegated to the Senior Administrator of the department offering the course.
- 2. On the Palmetto College campuses, the chancellor delegates responsibility for implementation of this policy, including credential verification, to the campus deans.
- 3. Each comprehensive campus should develop individual campus-based procedures to implement this policy.

### B. Verifying Credentials of Instructors of Record

Each person responsible for implementing this policy, as defined in section II.A., should establish his or her own procedures for verifying credentials of instructors of record within his or her college, school, department, or program. Credentials should be verified upon hire for new instructors of record, and before new courses are assigned to continuing instructors of record. Credential documentation must be maintained by course departments as long as the individual is in an active teaching role within the department.

### C. Submitting Faculty Credential Documentation for the SACSCOC Faculty Roster

SACSCOC requires each of its accredited institutions to report the qualifications of its teaching faculty using the SACSCOC Faculty Roster form. The Faculty Roster includes the names of all instructors of record during a given semester or semesters, a list of courses they are teaching, and their qualifications for teaching those courses.

Each person responsible for implementing this policy, as defined in section II.A., must ensure that proper credential documentation for each instructor of record is submitted to the office responsible for creating the SACSCOC Faculty Roster for his or her campus.

1. On the Columbia campus, credential documentation should be submitted to the Human Resources representative within each college or school. Credential documentation for an instructor of record teaching a course outside the purview of a college or school should be submitted to the Human Resources representative within the department offering the course. The Human Resources representative will then forward the documentation to the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (OIRA). All credential documents relevant to courses being taught should be on file in the course department and with OIRA by the tenth day of classes each semester. Refer to the [Faculty Credentials for SACSCOC](#) page on the OIRA website for more information.
2. On the Palmetto College campuses, credential documentation should be submitted to the campus Dean's office. The Dean's office will forward the documentation to the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (OIRA) on the Columbia campus. All credential documents relevant to courses being taught should be on file in the course department and with OIRA by the tenth day of classes each semester. Refer to the [Faculty Credentials for SACSCOC](#) page on the OIRA website for more information.
3. Each comprehensive campus should develop individual campus-based procedures for the submission of documentation for the SACSCOC Faculty Roster.

### III. Related Policies

Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, *Principles of Accreditation*, Comprehensive Standard 3.7.1.

University Policy ACAF 1.00 Recruitment and Appointment of Tenured, Tenure-Track and Non-Tenure-Track Faculty

University Policy ACAF 1.01 Recruitment and Appointment of Academic Administrators

University Policy ACAF 1.06 Academic Titles for Faculty and Unclassified Academic Staff Positions

## University Policy UNIV 2.50 Affiliate Appointments

### IV. Resources

[Faculty Credentials for SACSCOC](#)