

Instructor Justification Form Instructions for Department Chairs and Deans

Here are some basic instructions for completing the instructor justification form and for determining if individuals are actually qualified to teach the assigned courses. If there are additional questions, please contact Dan Mahony (5705 or mahony@louisville.edu).

1. The form needs to be completed only for instructors who are teaching an undergraduate course and do not have a master's, terminal degree, or 18 graduate hours in the teaching discipline OR are teaching a graduate or post-baccalaureate and do not have a terminal degree in the teaching discipline (or closely related discipline).
2. The comment section for each additional professional qualification should include a narrative explaining how that item (e.g., work experience, certification) qualifies them to teach that particular course. *SACS requires that justification be specific to the course.* For example, an individual who has published a couple of books on Shakespeare could easily be justified to teach an undergraduate Shakespeare class without an M.A. in English. However, it may not be possible to justify that individual to teach a class in 20th century American literature. Likewise, many years of K-12 teaching experience could be used to justify someone teaching a number of courses in the Master of Arts in Teaching program, but would not be sufficient for teaching a doctoral level research methods course.
3. The additional qualifications must be sufficient to offset the lack of an appropriate academic degree. For example, saying that an individual has a B.S. in Accounting would not be enough to justify that person to teach ACCT 201. The undergraduate degree alone does not meet the SACS guidelines. However, the B.S. could be part of the justification if he/she also passed the CPA exam and had work experience (see example below). A reasonable person could see that these "real world" experiences could make up for a lack of a master's degree and would be sufficient to teach an introductory course.
4. The written justification, therefore, may include more than one qualification. Although one qualification may be enough in some cases (10 years work experience in the public school system should be enough to justify an individual teaching in the Master of Arts in Teaching program), in other cases more than one qualification may be needed.
5. There must be some documentation of all of the qualifications used to justify an exception; the individual's resume/vita is not enough. SACS expects us to go beyond simply accepting what someone claims on the resume.
6. You will need to do a separate justification form for each class an individual teaches, but only need one copy of each piece of documentation (e.g., transcripts, official letters) as long as you keep all of the justifications and documentation in one file for each instructor.

Here is a sample narrative for one course:

Ms. Jones graduated with a B.S. in Accounting from James Madison University in 1997. She has worked for the accounting firm of Peat Markwick Main & Co. for 8 years. She is currently serving in the role of Senior Manager in the Auditing Division and has been involved in numerous audits during her time with the firm. Ms. Jones is also a Certified Public Accountant; she passed the exam in 1999. ACCT 430 (Auditing) is designed to provide students with an introduction to the basic auditing functions, all of which Ms. Jones is familiar with and has considerable experience applying in her job.