

University of Louisville Faculty Credentials Review

Instructor Justification Overview

All university academic units and the Faculty Personnel Office work to certify the credentials of all instructional staff as defined by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS). Documentation on the credentials of **all full-time and part-time faculty** who are instructors of record for one or more courses will be retained either in the Faculty Personnel Office (board-appointed faculty) or in the academic units (all other instructional staff/faculty). This includes graduate teaching assistants, adjunct/gratis, and other part-time instructional staff.

When determining acceptable qualifications of its faculty, SACS expects the institution to give primary consideration to the highest earned degree in the discipline. If this degree does not directly fit the instructional assignment, there must be some documentation of all of the qualifications used to justify an exception and the individual's resume/vita is not enough. SACS expects us to go beyond simply accepting what someone claims on their resume. Justifications should fit the courses assigned to the instructor of record and may need to be changed as their course assignments change.

SACS Credential Guidelines

- a. Faculty teaching baccalaureate courses: doctoral 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). At least 25 percent of the discipline course hours in each undergraduate major are taught by faculty members holding the terminal degree—usually the earned doctorate—in the 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: 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.”

SACS does allow the university to employ faculty who do not meet the guidelines as long as the university has a process and criteria for justifying and documenting exceptions. For all cases, the institution is responsible for documenting and justifying (as needed) the qualifications of its faculty.

Who needs a justification?

Faculty teaching baccalaureate courses with a doctoral 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) **will not** require a justification i.e., faculty with a PhD or Master's degree in Biology teaching an **undergraduate** course in Biology (BIOL101) is o.k.

Faculty teaching in a discipline not generally tied to their degree discipline **will need** justification i.e., a faculty member with a PhD in communication teaching in public health.

Faculty teaching graduate and post-baccalaureate course work that have a doctorate/terminal degree in the teaching discipline or a related discipline **will not** require a justification i.e., faculty with a PhD in Chemistry degree teaching a **graduate** level Chemistry course (CHEM590 or 690) is o.k.

Faculty teaching graduate and post-baccalaureate course work with a Master's degree **will need** a justification written i.e., an instructor with a MS in Chemistry degree teaching a **graduate** level course in Chemistry (CHEM590 or 690). There are no exceptions.

Faculty teaching any course with a bachelor's degree or less **will need** a justification written i.e., an instructor with a BA in Theatre Art degree teaching **any** Theatre Art class. There are no exceptions.

Graduate teaching assistants teaching baccalaureate courses **with** a master's in the teaching discipline or 18 graduate semester hours in the teaching discipline **will not** require a justification i.e., a GTA with a MS in Biology or 18 graduate hours in Biology teaching an undergraduate Biology course (BIOL101) is o.k.

Graduate teaching assistants teaching baccalaureate courses **without** a master's in the teaching discipline or 18 graduate semester hours in the teaching discipline **will need** a justification.

Graduate teaching assistants teaching **graduate and post-baccalaureate** course work **will need** a justification written. The assumption here is that the GTA does not have a terminal degree.

Additional Information

The instructor justification form is intended to assist units in collecting and documenting faculty credentials. Education data and the justification information should be entered into the PeopleSoft system after faculty course assignments are made; also reviewed and updated each term as needed.

The Faculty Credentials Policy and related reviews were initiated in the 2005-06 school year. The results of that review have been reported to SACS. It is expected that the review process will continue each term and for most units the focus will be on new faculty hires (full-time and part-time) and changes in instructional assignments that might result in the need for new justifications or changes in the current information.