

SACSCOC Faculty Credentials Certification Procedures

The Provost Office of Faculty Affairs works with all academic units to certify the credentials of all instructional staff as defined by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). Documentation of the credentials of **all full-time and part-time faculty** who are instructors of record for one or more courses are retained either in the Office of Faculty Affairs (full-time) or in the academic units (part-time). This documentation is also required for graduate teaching assistants (GTAs), adjunct/gratis, and other part-time instructional staff who are responsible for teaching courses. Documentation for GTAs, adjuncts/gratis, and other part-time instructional staff is maintained in the academic units. These procedures were established to ensure all necessary information is collected to document faculty credentials and qualifications in a consistent manner.

SACSCOC Instructional Staff Guidelines:

Qualified, effective faculty members are essential to carrying out the mission of the institution and ensuring the quality and integrity of its academic programs. Standard 6.2.a (faculty qualifications) of the Principles of Accreditation reads as follows:

“For each of its educational programs, the institution justifies and documents the qualifications of its faculty members.”

According to the [SACSCOC Faculty Credentials Guidelines](#), when an institution defines faculty qualifications using faculty credentials, institutions should use the following as credential guidelines:

*a. **Faculty teaching general education 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 associate degree courses designed for transfer to a baccalaureate degree: 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).*

**c. Faculty teaching associate degree courses not designed for transfer to the baccalaureate degree: bachelor’s degree in the teaching discipline, or associate’s degree and demonstrated competencies in the teaching discipline.*

*d. **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).*

*e. **Faculty teaching graduate and post-baccalaureate course work**: earned doctorate or the terminal degree in the teaching discipline (e.g., M.F.A, M.B.A., etc.) or a related discipline.*

*f. **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.*

**The University of Louisville does not offer associate level programs, sections b and c above do not apply to those teaching.*

SACSCOC allows institutions to employ faculty who do not meet the credential guidelines as long as the institution has a process and criteria for justifying and documenting exceptions. In the case of an exception, the justification must make a compelling case for how the alternative qualifications act as an equivalency for the lack of the expected academic credentials. Examples of acceptable documentation include but are not limited to the following: professional experience, academic and professional accomplishment (e.g., awards, peer recognition, eminence in field, etc.), and scholarly work. For all cases, the institution is responsible for justifying and documenting the qualifications of its faculty. For more information on how to submit a SACSCOC Additional Justification to Faculty Qualifications form go to: <https://louisville.edu/provost/faculty-personnel/faculty-credential-reporting-sacs-coc>.

Implementation:

Each unit/department must have a designated administrator responsible for verification of credentials before hiring and/or assigning courses to faculty. There are two possibilities for the verification of credentials:

- 1) for faculty who meet the SACSCOC minimum guidelines, the Standard Documentation of Credentials will apply (see section that follows).
- 2) for any faculty *who do not meet the SACSCOC minimum* guidelines, the Standard Documentation of Credentials *and* the SACSCOC Additional Justification to Faculty Qualifications form are required. It may be necessary to obtain transcripts from all higher education institutions to demonstrate qualifications (see the SACSCOC Guidelines earlier in this document). Note the SACSCOC Additional Justification to Faculty Qualifications form applies to a specific course and the qualifications discussed must relate to the student learning outcomes (SLO) of that course.

All documentation related to credentials is placed in the official faculty file maintained in the Office of the Dean for the hiring unit. The information on credentials will be scanned into the OnBase system by a designated staff member in the unit. The data from OnBase will allow for the creation of the required SACSCOC reports and allows units to generate reports on faculty credentials for their own use.

Standard Documentation of Credentials

Official Transcripts - The University requires all instructional faculty either full-time or part-time, to provide an official transcript of the highest degree attained. If that degree is not directly related to the teaching assignment, an official transcript of the degree that is relevant to the teaching assignment must also be provided. When the degree(s) represented by the official transcript(s) is/are not directly related to the employee's teaching assignment, the hiring unit/department must also submit a written justification to show the instructor is qualified to teach the courses they have been assigned (see SACSCOC Additional Justification to Faculty Qualifications form).

Curriculum Vitae/Resume – The University requires all instructional faculty whether full-time or part-time, to provide a curriculum vitae (CV) or resume. While a curriculum vitae or resume can never be used alone to justify an individual's qualifications, it is important for the University to have complete information on the background of any instructor of record. An individual's curriculum vitae (CV) or resume is not enough on its

own and SACSCOC expects institutions to substantiate additional qualifications that are based on other work and/or experience listed on the CV/resume.

English Proficiency - The University will assess the English proficiency of all applicants and faculty either full-time or part-time prior to employment to ensure adequate proficiency for direct instruction of students. The minimum criteria for evaluation of English proficiency are: (1) an ability to speak and write English clearly, (2) an ability to understand written and spoken English, and (3) an ability to communicate effectively in an academic environment (for example, previous successful employment in an academic institution). As part of the hiring process an administrator in the hiring unit will attest to the instructor's English language proficiency. The University reserves the right to further assess English language proficiency after hire to safeguard the quality of direct instruction of its students.

Foreign/International transcripts - Applicants with degree(s) from foreign/international institutions, with non-English transcripts or in cases where additional information is needed to certify the credentials of an application from a foreign/international institution, may be required to submit their transcript(s) to a service provider acceptable to the university for authentication and equivalency assessment. Once requested, the evaluation must be received by the university before the hire is complete. The following evaluation services are recommended. Cost of the evaluation may be paid by the unit or the applicant. The cost of the evaluation will vary based on the provider and the level of service requested.

Educational Credit Evaluators (ECE)

P.O. Box 92970
Milwaukee, WI 53202
414-289-3400
414-289-3411
eval@ece.org
Web: www.ece.org

World Education Services (WES)

P.O. Box 745, Old Chelsea Station
New York, NY 10113
1-800-937-3895 or 305-358-6688
212-966-6395
support@wes.org
Web: www.wes.org

SACSCOC Additional Justification to Faculty Qualifications Form

An Instructor Justification Form will be required in the case where an instructor does not meet the minimum SACSCOC faculty credentials guidelines. A faculty justification needs to be written if,

- 1) teaching an undergraduate course, the instructor of record does not hold a doctoral degree, or master's degree in the course discipline, or,
- 2) teaching a graduate course, the instructor of record does not hold a doctoral or terminal degree in the course discipline.

For either of these situations, additional evidence and documentation will be needed to show that an individual is qualified to teach the course or courses assigned to them as the instructor of record. This additional credentialing information will be submitted via the electronic SACSCOC Additional Justification to Faculty Qualifications form in OnBase.

For more information on what and how to submit an faculty justification follow the link to the Provost Office of Faculty Affairs website: <https://louisville.edu/provost/faculty-personnel/faculty-credential-reporting-sacs-coc>. On that website, there are support documents such as the Instructor Justification Checklist, directions on how to enter the justification, and a link to the SACSCOC Additional Justification to Faculty Qualifications form in OnBase.

Employment Eligibility Verification

Proof of authorization to work in the United States, as provided by the immigration laws of the United States, proof established by completion of the Federal I-9 form.

For more information about faculty credentialing, go to the [Provost Office of Faculty Affairs](#) website. Additional information may be found in the [Faculty Handbook](#) as well.