



To: Academic Deans

From: Gerry Bradley,
Interim University Provost

Robert (Bob) S. Goldstein,
Vice Provost/SACSCOC Liaison

Date: September 7, 2023

RE: **University Requirements for SACSCOC Compliance**

Deans are responsible for the maintenance of important documentary processes in their respective areas to ensure compliance with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) Principles of Accreditation. Unit compliance with the practices stated below will be an element in the annual evaluation of each dean.

Institutions accredited by SACSCOC are required to:

- maintain documentation on the credentials of instructional faculty,
- document student learning outcomes,
- provide timely notification of any changes in program-level accreditations,
- provide evidence of regular and substantive faculty interaction with students enrolled in online educational delivery methods, and
- ensure students provided with a UofL education online or at an off-campus instructional site (OCIS) have comparable experiences to those educated on the main campus.

The purpose of this correspondence is to reinforce relevant university procedures to ensure the institution complies with these standards.

I. Faculty Credentials

The Office of Faculty Affairs oversees the collection of faculty credential information for all faculty appointments approved by the university's Board of Trustees. Faculty Affairs also provides guidance to the academic units on the credentialing of other instructional staff (e.g., part-time lecturers and staff with dual appointments). Academic units are responsible for managing part-time faculty member's credentials documentation. More information is available online at: <http://louisville.edu/provost/faculty-personnel/faculty-credential-reporting-sacs-coc>

Educational Credentials: Educational credentials for all faculty appointments (full- and part-time) must be entered into the university's Workday Human Resources system. Faculty Affairs has primary data entry responsibility for full-time faculty and administrators. Each academic unit has a faculty credentials contact that works with Faculty Affairs to ensure the necessary data entry is completed for part-time faculty. The data entry of educational credentials must be completed (by either Faculty Affairs or the academic unit) during the hiring process.

Transcripts and Faculty Qualification Documentation: Faculty Affairs maintains a database of official transcripts, curricula vitae, and other documentation related to the qualifications of instructors for all faculty appointed by the Board of Trustees.

All other faculty or instructional staff employed through the academic unit as part-time lecturers or adjunct faculty must have their transcripts and other support documents maintained at the department/unit level.

This process includes staff, part-time lecturers, and graduate teaching assistants if they are listed as the instructor of record for a course section. For all part-time faculty, an official transcript, a curriculum vitae/resume, and other documentation as necessary to justify the qualifications of the individual must be retained in the academic unit personnel files and uploaded to OnBase. Any questions about the transmission of part-time faculty transcripts into the central transcript database (i.e., OnBase) may be directed to the Office of Faculty Affairs.

II. Syllabi

A course syllabus must be developed by each instructor and distributed to students at the start of the academic term. The posting of course syllabi in Blackboard is considered part of each instructor's preparation for each term. Students have a right to receive the information provided in the syllabus per university policy:

<https://louisville.edu/dos/students/studentrightsandresponsibilities>

The syllabus should clearly state the course objectives and learning outcomes. The learning outcomes should specify the knowledge, skills, and values that students are expected to obtain in a course or program. **In compliance with federal guidelines, syllabi for online courses should reflect opportunities for regular and substantive interaction with students.** Guidelines on the development of syllabi are available through the Delphi Center for Teaching and Learning: <http://louisville.edu/delphi/resources/syllabus>

Per University policy, each syllabus must contain the approved notification of Title IX and Clery Act (i.e., campus crime and security) reporting procedures and responsibilities. Each unit may have additional or specific requirements for the information that must appear on a syllabus. See the listing of unit syllabi policies here:

<http://louisville.edu/delphi/resources/syllabus/schoolpolicies>

Syllabi must be posted to Blackboard using prescribed naming conventions for UofL to maintain archival records of syllabi, which are used to establish transfer equivalencies for out-going students, provide evidence of compliance to accreditors, and assist with other academic compliance requests. More information about the posting of syllabi to Blackboard is available at:

- <https://louisville.edu/delphi/blackboard/help/instructor-help/add-a-syllabus-to-your-course>
- <http://louisville.edu/oapa/sacs-data-requirements>

III. Program-Level Accreditations

The Office of Academic Planning & Accountability (OAPA) has provided guidance to all associate deans about the timely notification of the outcomes of program-level accreditation reviews and/or on-campus visits by accrediting bodies. An important aspect of this guidance is to provide notification to OAPA within two weeks of being informed of the outcome of an accreditor's review process. The institution is required to publicly disclose our accreditation status with all United States Department of Education (USDOE) recognized accreditors, and we must notify SACSCOC of any change in our accreditation status with such agencies. Timely notification to OAPA ensures we remain in compliance with this requirement. Additionally, OAPA assists with the review of all program-level accreditations.

As part of this process, OAPA conducts a planning meeting prior to the academic program beginning their self-study process. If a program has an accreditation occurring within the academic unit during the 2023-2024 academic year, OAPA should have already been in contact with the unit to schedule the initial meeting (or already held it). If that has

not happened, contact Dr. Kay Vetter, Director of Accreditation and Academic Programs, at kay.vetter@louisville.edu as soon as possible.

For more information about the notification and review process of program-level accreditations, visit <https://louisville.edu/oapa/accreditation-academic-programs-1/program-level-accreditation-review-and-notification-process>.

IV. Regular and Substantive Interaction

SACSCOC and the USDOE require evidence of regular and substantive interaction between faculty and students enrolled in online methods of educational delivery. To ensure compliance with this standard, a series of questions has been added to the course development process requiring the associate deans to acknowledge the requirement of such interaction and that documentation is maintained by the unit for newly established online courses. Additionally, all faculty teaching one or more online courses this academic year were sent the [Regular and Substantive Interaction in Online Courses Policy](#). Faculty are expected to read the policy and confirm their acknowledgement of the policy. Full compliance is required, and periodic status updates will be provided to academic units for follow-up.

V. Academic Agreements with External Partners

Any agreements between UofL and an external agency involving an academic program (e.g., degree, certificate, etc.) must be reviewed by the Provost Program Proposal Review Committee (PPPRC) prior to being sent to the Office of the Provost for approval and execution. The types of agreements governed by this process include, but are not limited to the following:

- dual degrees (i.e., a course of study resulting in a student receiving degrees from each participating institution at the same educational level),
- joint degrees (i.e., a course of study resulting in a student receiving one degree bearing the insignia of each participating institution at the same educational level),
- transfer agreements,
- research agreements,
- continuation pathways (i.e., a course of study resulting in a student receiving degrees from each participating institution at different educational levels),
- off-campus instructional sites (OCIS), or
- cooperative academic arrangements (i.e., transcribing courses/instruction offered by other institutions/entities as UofL courses).

For more information about this review and approval process, visit <https://louisville.edu/oapa/exchange-agreements-and-programs/academic-agreements-process>.

VI. Off-Campus Instructional Sites (OCIS)

All students earning UofL credit need to be provided with comparable academic experiences and student support services regardless of whether those courses are offered on-campus, online, or at an OCIS. Any academic program coordinator (e.g., department chair, graduate program coordinator, etc.) with courses being offered at a location other than the Belknap campus needs to ensure they correspond with OAPA to provide requested information about the quality of the site. Per SACSCOC standards and policies, both the Health Science Center (HSC) and Shelby campuses are considered OCIS. Academic units offering programs and/or courses at the Shelby campus must notify Bob Goldstein, Vice Provost, to ensure the program is offering less than 50% of its courses at this OCIS. This only

applies to sites where for-credit courses being transcribed as UofL courses are offered; student placements, internship sites, transfer agreements, study abroad locations, and student exchanges are not considered OCIS.

VII. Next Steps/Reminders:

1. Each dean is asked to remind their faculty that posting of syllabi in Blackboard is an ongoing requirement. All course sections must have a syllabus posted unless the course has been exempted. The list of exempted courses can be found at: <https://louisville.edu/oapa/course-syllabus-collection/sacs-data-requirements>
2. Academic units are asked to confirm that the unit's personnel files for all part-time instructional faculty hires contain the required documentation of credentials; transcripts, curricula vitae, and other required documentation have been uploaded to OnBase; and the documentation corresponds with the human resources data in the university's Workday system. Please note that Faculty Affairs will continue to maintain the files of all full-time faculty and academic administrators and complete the necessary data entry. Academic units with part-time/adjunct faculty are responsible for maintaining the appropriate credentials files in OnBase and within their unit. OAPA and Faculty Affairs will conduct an audit of faculty credentials during the fall semester and notify Associate Deans of individuals missing required documentation in OnBase.
3. Each dean is asked to ensure faculty members teaching online courses complete the annual acknowledgement of the [Regular and Substantive Interaction in Online Courses Policy](#).
4. Each dean is asked to notify OAPA immediately if they have a program-level accreditation self-study or other accreditation reporting requirement due during the 2023-2024 academic year if OAPA has not already been in contact with the academic program.

Questions about the above university processes can be directed to the following units:

Accreditation Requirements

Kay Vetter, Director of Accreditation and Academic Planning

kay.vetter@louisville.edu

502-852-3551

Faculty Credentials

Cherie Dawson-Edwards, Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs

cherie.dawson@louisville.edu

502-852-2583

Course Syllabi Guidelines for Undergraduate Courses

Beth Willey, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education

aewill01@louisville.edu

502-852-6159

Course Syllabi Guidelines for Graduate Courses

Beth Boehm, Dean of the Graduate School and Vice Provost for Graduate Affairs

beth.boehm@louisville.edu

502-852-5110

Blackboard Questions

<http://louisville.edu/delphi/blackboard/help/instructor-help/add-a-syllabus-to-your-course>

Thank you for your attention to these important university requirements.

Sincerely,

Gerry Bradley
Interim University Provost

Robert (Bob) S. Goldstein
Vice Provost/SACSCOC Liaison

cc: Kim Schatzel, Ph.D.; President
Kay Vetter, Ed.D.; Director of Accreditation and Academic Programs
Cherie Dawson-Edwards, Ph.D.; Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs
Beth Willey, Ph.D.; Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education
Beth Boehm, Ph.D.; Vice Provost for Graduate Affairs
Kelvin Thompson, Ed.D.; Vice Provost for Online Strategy and Teaching Innovation
Associate Deans