

## **Florida State University Policy 3A-2**

Title of Policy:	Policy for Credentialing Faculty Members
Responsible Executive:	Vice President for Faculty Development and Advancement
Approving Official:	Provost
Effective Date:	March 31, 2023
Revision History:	New April 30, 2013, Revised March 31, 2023

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

Florida State University ensures that all instructors of record possess the academic preparation, training, and experience to teach in an academic setting, meet or exceed the minimum requirements of accrediting bodies and accomplish the mission of the institution. This applies to all instructors of record, including but not limited to, full and part-time faculty, tenured, tenure-track, clinical, visiting instructors, instructors teaching with courtesy appointments and adjunct positions as well as graduate teaching assistants.

When determining acceptable qualifications of its faculty, Florida State University gives primary consideration to the highest earned degree in the discipline. The institution also considers competence, effectiveness, and capacity, including, as appropriate, undergraduate and graduate degrees, related work experiences in the field, professional licensure and certifications, honors and awards, continuous documented excellence in teaching, or other demonstrated competencies and achievements that contribute to effective teaching and student learning outcomes.

For all cases, the institution is responsible for documenting and justifying the qualifications of its faculty prior to appointment.

### **II. POLICY**

#### **A. Qualification Guidelines**

The university applies the following guidelines in establishing faculty credentials:

1. 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).
2. 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).
3. 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).
4. Faculty teaching graduate and post-baccalaureate course work: earned doctorate/terminal degree in the teaching discipline or a related discipline.
5. Graduate teaching assistants: To meet SACSCOC guidelines regarding graduate teaching assistants, all graduate students assigned as instructors of record should have either a master's in the same discipline or have satisfactorily completed at least 18 semester-based graduate credit hours in the same discipline to that of instruction. Credits for which an "incomplete" has been assigned, such as research hours, should not be included in determining the number of graduate hours completed. Graduate student instructors of record must receive appropriate training prior to instruction and regular in-service training.

Training may include completion of the teaching assistant training provided by Program for Instructional Excellence (PIE) and/or in-unit

training. All graduate student instructors of record must be supervised by a faculty member holding teaching credentials appropriate to the course and should be regularly evaluated on their teaching performance.

Departments wishing to appoint graduate students with fewer than 18 completed graduate credit hours as instructors of record should maintain documentation demonstrating additional credentials that qualify the individual for instruction.

6. Exceptions: In the event an instructor has not completed eighteen (18) hours of graduate course work in the discipline in which he or she will teach, exceptional alternative qualifications will need to be documented to justify the appointment of the instructor. Alternative qualifications may include professional licensure and certifications, diplomas or certificates earned, publications and presentations in the field, honors and awards, and other demonstrated competencies and achievements. Documentation that is relevant beyond the curriculum vitae will require the verification and signature of the college Dean before appointment.
7. In order to ensure that all instructors of record possess the academic preparation, training, and experience to teach in an academic setting, instructors of record must present credentials that comply with the requirements of applicable accrediting agencies and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). The highest degree earned is the usual credential and a transcript is the typical evidence for that degree. More generally, according to section 4 of the [FSU Faculty Handbook](#), these credentials include current curriculum vitae, official transcripts, letters of recommendations and other documents as appropriate, such as certain licenses, certification, or work experience, if needed as alternatives to establish faculty qualifications.

8. For purposes of this policy, an official transcript is defined as a transcript or other academic record that includes the appropriate notation that is an official document of record for that institution. Each individual transcript must meet the authentication criteria based on the institution's standard. The transcript must contain all of the following:
  - a. An official seal if used by the issuing institution;
  - b. Signature of the appropriate authorizing agent;
  - c. The institution's official letterhead or stationary;
  - d. The institution's watermark or other identifier, and
  - e. The date of issue.

Official transcripts are required to be sent to the instructor's department chair (or Dean in the case of non-departmentalized colleges). The Dean of the relevant college is responsible for ensuring the authenticity of the transcript. Once authenticity of the transcript and at least 18 graduate semester hours in the field are ensured by the Dean, the official transcript should be forwarded to the Office of Human Resources for addition to the personnel file for the faculty member. The Office of Human Resources will then forward the original hard copies of the transcript and the curriculum vitae to the Office of Faculty Development and Advancement, as well as a scanned copy of the appointment page, letter of offer, and transcript for the OMNI tenure calculation records, as appropriate.

SACSCOC establishes the qualifications applicable to all faculty members, as described in section 4 of the FSU Faculty Handbook. This standard also applies to foreign educated faculty. For foreign educated faculty, if a transcript is available for a degree from a foreign institution, the transcript must be evaluated to show equivalency to a U.S. degree. A detailed, course-by-course foreign transcript evaluation is required to meet any credential requirement, even if a U.S. college or university has

accepted the foreign coursework. It is the responsibility of the faculty member to bear the costs to obtain official transcripts and copies of licenses and certifications.

## **B. Foreign Transcripts and Offiēe Campus Sites**

1. Evaluation of foreign transcripts must be done through a certified external agency that provides credential evaluations. The transcript and other applicable academic records should be accompanied by a notarized translation if it is not in English. If a transcript is not available, an approved external evaluation agency may be used to evaluate foreign credentials for equivalence to a U.S. degree.
2. Foreign Faculty Teaching Abroad: Florida State University requires that all foreign faculty teaching in University study abroad programs provide official credentials that meet both University and SACSCOC standards for instructors of record and which are evaluated as needed by a certified external agency that provides credential evaluation. All foreign faculty teaching in University study abroad programs also must respect the procedures and policies of higher education in the host country.
3. Faculty Teaching in Degree Programs on Branch Campuses: Policies, procedures, and standards concerning the appointment and evaluation of faculty at branch campuses are the same as those for the Tallahassee campus. Following completion of the search process by the academic unit, all faculty appointment documents are processed through the Office of Human Resources for every person appointed to teach at a branch campus.

Each academic department maintains oversight over all faculty, full-time and part-time, who teach in the programs of that department. Many of the units have academic program coordinators located permanently at the branch campuses. In addition to the full-time faculty who teach courses,

some branch campuses have one or more full-time faculty-ranked administrators on-site providing additional coordination and planning concerning academic programs at that campus. As a result of these standards, the number and quality of full-time faculty on each extended campus is adequate to assure the quality and integrity of the academic programs offered on those campuses.

4. Approval of Faculty Teaching in Study Abroad Programs: Some study abroad programs operate with only regular University faculty providing the instruction. These programs are typically smaller, more concentrated programs. Other programs, such as those at the Republic of Panama campus, rely partially on hiring faculty abroad for instruction. In such scenarios, faculty abroad meet all standards applicable to faculty appointment and are appointed to teach University courses using the following credential assessment mechanisms, which have been approved by the University administration. Non-University faculty teaching study abroad programs undergo credential review prior to teaching courses abroad. Non-University teaching faculty must hold academic credentials that meet the University's Instructor of Record Policy. One of the following methods must be used for faculty credentials:

- Official transcript of highest foreign degree earned and U.S. equivalency certification; OR official transcript of highest U.S. degree earned.
- Curriculum vitae

5. College of Medicine Clinical Faculty in Part-Time Courtesy Appointments: Florida State University requires that College of Medicine faculty in part-time courtesy appointments teaching off-campus clinical courses be verified as having current medical licensure in the state in which s/he teaches. The College of Medicine shall use the official state

license verification database to verify credentials in lieu of obtaining the official transcript for the medical degree.

### **C. Accountability / Responsibilities:**

The basic responsibility for the verification of all faculty credential requirements is the responsibility of the academic instructional units offering the courses in which the faculty member will teach. Verification and validations must be completed prior to the faculty member beginning instruction in the course and must be conducted for each separate course taught. Allowable extensions to this policy are found below in the Implementation section.

It is the responsibility of all instructors of record to provide the university with the documentation needed to verify their credentials. It is the responsibility of the faculty member to bear the costs to obtain official transcripts and copies of licenses and certifications. Graduate teaching assistants may use FSU internal transcripts to verify that they have successfully completed eighteen hours of graduate course work in the appropriate discipline.

The academic instructional units are responsible for gathering, reviewing and verifying the teaching qualifications for instructors of records, including graduate assistants who serve as instructors of records, and adjuncts, at the time of hire. This process will occur prior to any instructor's appointment with the University, regardless of the mode of delivery or course location. The department chair will assist the Dean in the acquisition of the documents required for the credentialing process.

The determination of adequacy of credentials is the responsibility of the college Dean or, if appropriate, program director. In the event that the Dean or director cannot render a determination, it is the responsibility of the Vice President for Faculty Development and Advancement.

For the purposes of this policy, the university accepts the common collegiate practice in recognizing an academic discipline, concentration or field of study. The university uses four-digit Classification of Instructional Program (CIP codes) to determine whether or not an instructor's education background is the same discipline as the courses being taught. The appropriate graduate faculty status (see Appendix A: Graduate Faculty Status) is required for faculty teaching graduate courses or serving on graduate committees. For faculty teaching interdisciplinary courses, documentation must be provided that the faculty member's qualifications are relevant to the disciplines that are components of the course. The Vice President for Faculty Development and Advancement must approve exceptions.

The university offers undergraduate Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) programs for both the Air Force and Army. Most instructors for undergraduate ROTC courses 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 training programs, or have accumulated substantial and relevant experience.

After approval by the academic Dean, the Office of Human Resources shall maintain relevant documentation including curriculum vitae, official transcripts, and letters of recommendation for faculty covered by the bargaining agreement and instructors of record. Graduate students assigned as instructors of record are not required to have curriculum vitae in the system, but must have official proof of completion of at least 18 semester-based graduate credit hours in the same discipline to that of instruction. (See II.E. above.)



#### **D. Implementation**

A complete credentialing file including any additional qualification for all faculty members including instructors with courtesy, clinical, visiting, and adjunct appointments, is due at the Office of Human Resources before any such instructor will be appointed (See Appendix B Faculty Credentialing Checklist).

It may be necessary in some instances to have a faculty member begin teaching prior to receipt of an official transcript. In such situations, the appropriate college Dean must compile all the relevant information regarding the qualifications of the prospective faculty member, including current curriculum vitae, letters of recommendation, and alternative or additional qualification documentation along with an unofficial transcript and a copy of the request for an official transcript. The Dean shall notify in writing the Vice President for Faculty Development and Advancement immediately about any temporary “incomplete” credentialing files. The Vice President will notify Human Resources about the acceptability of the qualifications of the prospective faculty member. If the Vice President approves the appointment based on the information provided by the Dean, the file will be sent to Human Resources, which will complete the appointment. Once the official transcript has been received, it must be sent by the Dean to the Office of Human Resources, and it will be placed in the credentialing file.

#### **E. Schedule for Implementation:**

Implementation is an ongoing process in keeping with the academic year calendar.

### **III. LEGAL SUPPORT, JUSTIFICATION, AND REVIEW OF THIS POLICY**

Board of Governors’ Regulation 1.001(5)(a), The President has delegated authority from the Board of Trustees as to all personnel qualifications which has been delegated to the

Provost as to faculty. The Vice President for Faculty Development and Advancement, working with the Provost, has authority to establish all policy regarding faculty employment issues.

The Vice President for Faculty Development and Advancement shall be responsible for periodic review and of this policy and for suggesting any necessary revisions to the Provost and President for their approval.

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Jim Clark, Provost

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March 31, 2023  
Date

## Appendix A

### Graduate Faculty Status

**Graduate Faculty Status.** Eligible to serve on any graduate committee. (Chairing or serving on doctoral or master's committee is subject to the approval of the student's department chair and should be in accordance with established and approved guidelines.) Eligible to teach graduate courses. This is the only status that may be awarded to tenure track faculty. Can be awarded to active non-tenure track faculty under special circumstances.

**Retired Graduate Faculty Status.** Retiring faculty with GFS may be granted this status. Must have a letter from the chair of the department in which the faculty has status with specific approval for this status. May continue the committee roles in which they served at the time of retirement. Eligible to serve as an extra member on a graduate committee. Eligible to teach graduate courses.

**Co-Doctoral Directive Status.** Only awarded to non-tenure track faculty or courtesy appointments. Eligible to co-direct and/or serve as an extra member of a doctoral or master's committee. Eligible to teach graduate courses with permanent CCDS.

**Co-Masters Directive Status.** Only awarded to non-tenure track faculty or courtesy appointments. Eligible to co-direct or serve as an extra member of a master's committee. May serve as an extra member of a doctorate committee. Eligible to teach graduate course with permanent CMDS.

**Graduate Teaching Status.** Only awarded to non-tenure track faculty or qualified visiting faculty appointments. Eligible to teach graduate courses.

## Appendix B

### Faculty Credentialing Checklist

#### Florida State University – Faculty Credentialing Checklist

A complete credentialing file including any additional qualifications for all faculty members, including instructors with courtesy, clinical, visiting, and adjunct appointments, is due at the Office of Human Resources before any such instructor will be appointed.

#### **FACULTY INFORMATION**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Information \_\_\_\_\_

Academic Unit (Dept/College) \_\_\_\_\_

Date credentialing Completed. \_\_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_

#### **CHECKLIST**

Official Transcript	From College to HR
Curriculum Vitae	From College to HR
Offer Letter	<b>F</b> rom College to HR
Letters of Recommendation (as needed)	From College to HR
Additional Justification for appointment approval	From Dean to FDA to HR
Additional Justification for temporary appointment approval, as needed.	From Dean to FDA to HR