

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

2 Title of Policy: Policy for Credentialing Faculty Members  
3 Responsible Executive: Vice President for Faculty Development and Advancement  
4 Approving Official: Provost  
5 Effective Date: April 30, 2013  
6 Revision History: New April 30, 2013

7

8 **I. INTRODUCTION**

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

15

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

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

26

27 **II. POLICY**

28 **A. Qualification Guidelines:**

29 **The university applies the following guidelines in establishing faculty**  
30 **credentials:**

- 31 1. Faculty teaching general education courses at the undergraduate level: doctorate  
32 or master's degree in the teaching discipline or master's degree with a  
33 concentration in the teaching discipline (a minimum of 18 graduate semester  
34 hours in the teaching discipline).
- 35
- 36 2. Faculty teaching associate degree courses designed for transfer to a baccalaureate  
37 degree: doctorate or master's degree in the teaching discipline or master's degree  
38 with a concentration in the teaching discipline (a minimum of 18 graduate  
39 semester hours in the teaching discipline).
- 40
- 41 3. Faculty teaching baccalaureate courses: doctorate or master's degree in the  
42 teaching discipline or master's degree with a concentration in the teaching  
43 discipline (minimum of 18 graduate semester hours in the teaching discipline).
- 44
- 45 4. Faculty teaching graduate and post-baccalaureate course work: earned  
46 doctorate/terminal degree in the teaching discipline or a related discipline.
- 47
- 48 5. Graduate teaching assistants: To meet SACS guidelines regarding graduate  
49 teaching assistants, all graduate students assigned as instructors of record should  
50 have either a master's in the same discipline or have satisfactorily completed at  
51 least 18 semester-based graduate credit hours in the same discipline to that of  
52 instruction. Credits for which an "incomplete" has been assigned, such as research  
53 hours, should not be included in determining the number of graduate hours  
54 completed. Graduate student instructors of record must receive appropriate  
55 training prior to instruction and regular in-service training.

56  
57 Training may include completion of the teaching assistant training provided by  
58 Program for Instructional Excellence (PIE) and/or in-unit training. All graduate  
59 student instructors of record must be supervised by a faculty member holding  
60 teaching credentials appropriate to the course and should be regularly evaluated  
61 on their teaching performance.

62 Departments wishing to appoint graduate students with fewer than 18 completed  
63 graduate credit hours as instructors of record should maintain documentation  
64 demonstrating additional credentials that qualify the individual for instruction.  
65

66 6. Exceptions: In the event an instructor has not completed eighteen (18) hours of  
67 graduate course work in the discipline in which he or she will teach, exceptional  
68 alternative qualifications will need to be documented to justify the appointment of  
69 the instructor. Alternative qualifications may include professional licensure and  
70 certifications, diplomas or certificates earned, publications and presentations in  
71 the field, honors and awards, and other demonstrated competencies and  
72 achievements. Documentation that is relevant beyond the curriculum vitae will  
73 require the verification and signature of the college Dean before appointment.  
74

75 7. In order to ensure that all instructors of record possess the academic preparation,  
76 training, and experience to teach in an academic setting, instructors of record must  
77 present credentials that comply with the requirements of applicable accrediting  
78 agencies and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Commission on  
79 Colleges (SACSCOC). The highest degree earned is the usual credential and a  
80 transcript is the typical evidence for that degree. More generally, according to  
81 section 4 of the FSU Faculty Handbook, these credentials include current  
82 curriculum vitae, official transcripts, letters of recommendations and other  
83 documents as appropriate, such as certain licenses, certifications, or work  
84 experience, if needed as alternatives to establish faculty qualifications.  
85

86 8. For purposes of this policy, an official transcript is defined as a transcript or other  
87 academic record that includes the appropriate notation that it is an official  
88 document of record for that institution. Each individual transcript must meet the  
89 authentication criteria based on that institution's standard. The transcript must  
90 contain all of the following:  
91

92 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 Office 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

123 a transcript is not available, an approved external evaluation agency may be used  
124 to evaluate foreign credentials for equivalence to a U.S. degree.

125  
126 2. Foreign Faculty Teaching Abroad: Florida State University requires that all  
127 foreign faculty teaching in University study abroad programs provide official  
128 credentials that meet both University and SACS standards for instructors of  
129 record and which are evaluated as needed by a certified external agency that  
130 provides credential evaluation. All foreign faculty teaching in University study  
131 abroad programs also must respect the procedures and policies of higher  
132 education in the host country.

133  
134 3. Faculty Teaching in Degree Programs on Branch Campuses: Policies, procedures,  
135 and standards concerning the appointment and evaluation of faculty at branch  
136 campuses are the same as those for the Tallahassee campus. Following  
137 completion of the search process by the academic unit, all faculty appointment  
138 documents are processed through the Office of Human Resources for every  
139 person appointed to teach at a branch campus.

140 Each academic department maintains oversight over all faculty, full-time and  
141 part-time, who teach in the programs of that department. Many of the units have  
142 academic program coordinators located permanently at the branch campuses. In  
143 addition to the full-time faculty who teach courses, some branch campuses have  
144 one or more full-time faculty-ranked administrators on-site providing additional  
145 coordination and planning concerning academic programs at that campus. As a  
146 result of these standards, the number and quality of full-time faculty on each  
147 extended campus is adequate to assure the quality and integrity of the academic  
148 programs offered on those campuses.

149  
150 4. Approval of Faculty Teaching in Study Abroad Programs: Some study abroad  
151 programs operate with only regular University faculty providing the instruction.  
152 These programs are typically smaller, more concentrated programs.

153 Other programs, such as those at the Republic of Panama campus, rely partially

154 on hiring faculty abroad for instruction. In such scenarios, faculty abroad meet all  
155 standards applicable to faculty appointment and are appointed to teach University  
156 courses using the following credential assessment mechanisms, which have been  
157 approved by the University administration. Non-University faculty teaching study  
158 abroad programs undergo credential review prior to teaching courses abroad.  
159 Non-University teaching faculty must hold academic credentials that meet the  
160 University's Instructor of Record Policy. One of the following methods must be  
161 used for faculty credentials:

- 162
- 163 • Official transcript of highest foreign degree earned and U.S. equivalency  
164 certification; OR official transcript of highest U.S. degree earned.
- 165 • Curriculum vitae.
- 166

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

168

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

175

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

182

183 The academic instructional units are responsible for gathering, reviewing and  
184 verifying the teaching qualifications for instructors of record, including graduate

185 assistants who serve as instructors of records, and adjuncts, at the time of hire. This  
186 process will occur prior to any instructor's appointment with the University,  
187 regardless of the mode of delivery or course location. The department chair will  
188 assist the Dean in the acquisition of the documents required for the credentialing  
189 process.

190  
191 The determination of adequacy of credentials is the responsibility of the college Dean  
192 or, if appropriate, program director. In the event that the Dean or director cannot  
193 render a determination, it is the responsibility of the Vice President for Faculty  
194 Development and Advancement.

195  
196 For the purposes of this policy, the university accepts the common collegiate practice  
197 in recognizing an academic discipline, concentration or field of study. The university  
198 uses four-digit Classification of Instructional Program (CIP codes) to determine  
199 whether or not an instructor's educational background is in the same discipline as the  
200 courses being taught. The appropriate graduate faculty status (see Appendix A:  
201 Graduate Faculty Status) is required for faculty teaching graduate courses or serving  
202 on graduate committees. For faculty teaching interdisciplinary courses,  
203 documentation must be provided that the faculty member's qualifications are relevant  
204 to the disciplines that are components of the course. The Vice President for Faculty  
205 Development and Advancement must approve exceptions.

206  
207 The university offers undergraduate Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC)  
208 programs for both the Air Force and Army. Most instructors for undergraduate  
209 ROTC courses are provided to the university through the military. The university  
210 provides them with courtesy appointments and credentials their instruction provided  
211 they have a master's degree or higher, have completed appropriate military training  
212 programs, or have accumulated substantial and relevant experience.

213 After approval by the academic Dean, the Office of Human Resources shall maintain  
214 relevant documentation including curriculum vitae, official transcripts, and letters of  
215 recommendation for faculty covered by the bargaining agreement and instructors of

216 record. Graduate students assigned as instructors of record are not required to have  
217 curriculum vitae in the system, but must have official proof of completion of at least  
218 18 semester-based graduate credit hours in the same discipline to that of instruction.  
219 (See II.E. above.)  
220

221 **D. Implementation**

222 A complete credentialing file including any additional qualifications for all faculty  
223 members, including instructors with courtesy, clinical, visiting, and adjunct  
224 appointments, is due at the Office of Human Resources before any such instructor  
225 will be appointed (see Appendix B: Faculty Credentialing Checklist).  
226

227 It may be necessary in some instances to have a faculty member begin teaching prior  
228 to receipt of an official transcript. In such situations, the appropriate college Dean  
229 must compile all the relevant information regarding the qualifications of the  
230 prospective faculty member, including current curriculum vitae, letters of  
231 recommendation, and alternative or additional qualification documentation along with  
232 an unofficial transcript and a copy of the request for an official transcript. The Dean  
233 shall notify in writing the Vice President for Faculty Development and Advancement  
234 immediately about any temporarily “incomplete” credentialing files. The Vice  
235 President will notify Human Resources about the acceptability of the qualifications of  
236 the prospective faculty member. If the Vice President approves the appointment based  
237 on the information provided by the Dean, the file will be sent to Human Resources,  
238 which will complete the appointment. Once the official transcript has been received,  
239 it must be sent by the Dean to the Office of Human Resources, and it will be placed in  
240 the credentialing file.  
241

242 **E. Schedule for Implementation:**

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244 Implementation is an ongoing process in keeping with the academic year calendar.  
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247 **III. LEGAL SUPPORT, JUSTIFICATION, AND REVIEW OF THIS POLICY**

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249 The Vice President for Faculty Development and Advancement has exclusive authority, as  
250 delegated by the Provost and President, to establish all policy regarding faculty employment  
251 issues.

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

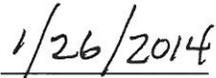
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259 Garnett S. Stokes, Provost

  
\_\_\_\_\_

Date

260 **Appendix A**

261 **Graduate Faculty Status**

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

268

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

274

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

278

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

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

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**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**

- |   |                        |
|---|------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Official Transcript  | From College to HR     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Curriculum Vitae   | From College to HR     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Offer Letter   | From College to HR     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Letters of Recommendation (as needed)                                  | From College to HR     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Additional Justification for appointment approval                      | From Dean to FDA to HR |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Additional Justification for temporary appointment approval, as needed | From Dean to FDA to HR |