



Title: Teaching Credentials for UA Faculty and Teaching Assistants

ID: AA- 5

Administrative Division: Academic Affairs

Unit: 200012-Office of Inst Effectiveness

Effective Date: 11/1/2016

Contact: Dr. Ginger Bishop, Director of Institutional Effectiveness

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Purpose:

It is essential the University guarantee its faculty and instructors are qualified to teach the curriculum. This is critical for academic accreditation and the public trust.

Policy:

The University of Alabama follows the general guidelines provided by the Southern Association of Colleges and School Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) for establishing [faculty teaching credentials](http://sacscoc.org/pdf/081705/faculty%20credentials.pdf) (<http://sacscoc.org/pdf/081705/faculty%20credentials.pdf>). The appropriate guidelines are as follows.

- “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).”
- “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).”
- “Faculty teaching **graduate and post-baccalaureate course work**: earned doctorate/terminal degree in the teaching discipline or a related discipline.”
- “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.”
Graduate teaching assistants are limited to only teaching **undergraduate** course-sections unless they possess an earned terminal degree in the teaching discipline.

Faculty Assignments - All faculty assigned to teach for-credit courses (i.e. individuals with an assigned percent of effort in the Banner system greater than zero (0) for a course-section) are expected to meet the above guidelines.

Graduate Teaching Assistant Assignments – The above graduate teaching assistant guideline only applies to individual’s assigned primary responsibility for awarding grades in credit carrying course-sections. This requirement does not apply to assistants engaged in assignments such as assisting in laboratory sessions, teaching physical education activities, attending or helping to prepare lectures, grading papers, keeping class records, conducting discussion groups, conducting tutorials, and holding student conferences.

Documenting Assignments – Faculty and instructors with exceptional experience and/or credentials in lieu of the appropriate degree may provide quality educational instruction. However, school or

college deans must identify and justify the instructor's experience and/or alternate credentials that qualify the individual to teach the specific assigned course. Justifications for these teaching assignments and evidence of qualifications must be maintained by the dean. Examples of appropriate justifications and evidence to support the justification are provided below.

Scope (Policy applies to the following audience):

- Students
- Faculty
- Staff
- Contractors
- Volunteers
- Other – Specify: Enter other scope description here.

Definitions, Procedures, and/or References:

Who Should Read this Policy: All Deans, Associate and Assistant Deans, department chairs, program directors, and staff responsible for making faculty and graduate assistant teaching assignments.

Review and Approval History: This policy was reviewed and approved by the Dean's Council on October 10, 2016, and the Council of Assistant and Associate Deans (CAAD) on October 26, 2016.

How to Write Faculty Credential Justifications: Employing highly qualified faculty who deliver exceptional educational experiences supports The University of Alabama's goal to provide a premier undergraduate and graduate education that offers a global perspective and is characterized by outstanding teaching, high-quality scholarship and distinctive curricular and co-curricular programs. It is the responsibility of the University's academic leaders, especially college deans and department chairs, to ensure that each instructor is adequately prepared to teach a specific course. Most UA faculty have the appropriate academic credentials to demonstrate adequate preparation, such as a terminal degree in the discipline. Others have exceptional experience in the field or alternative credentials that qualify them to teach a specific course. It is the responsibility of the department chair to justify why a particular instructor who does not have the appropriate academic credentials is qualified to teach a specific course. This justification, once approved by the dean for an instructor, must be maintained by the college dean. The following directions are intended to assist the department chair and dean (or designee) with reviewing the instructor's credentials and developing an appropriate justification.

An acceptable justification should:

- be complete, but concise (no more than 200 words);
- refer to information from the instructor's CV/resume and/or transcript;
- explain specifically why the instructor is qualified to teach the particular course if academic credentials are in a different degree area or do not match required degree level; and
- highlight professional experience, honors, academic research, prior teaching in higher education, and/or alternative credentials or licensure related to the course topics.

If, in rare cases, an instructor's CV/resume and transcript do not demonstrate adequate preparation for teaching a specific course, but the instructor is hired in one instance to teach a course (e.g. the regular instructor wins the lottery the day before classes start), the dean should also outline who will

supervise, orient, evaluate, and support the instructor and how they intend to do so. The dean should also note specifically that this is a one-time occurrence.

Examples

Instructor Smith has been assigned to teach the graduate course FI522 Bank Administration. His highest degree is an MBA. He has a bachelor's degree in Finance.

In addition to undergraduate and graduate course work in Finance (see transcript for courses with FI designation), Instructor Smith spent 25 years as president of ABC Bank. During this time, he served in various offices, including chairman for three terms, of the state's Association of Banking. He has authored over a dozen books on banking and finance, including several books on banking administration (see CV). He also authored journal articles and presented at national and regional conferences on banking and finance. He currently consults with financial institutions around the US.

Instructor Dell, a student in ABC master's program, has been assigned to teach an ABC undergraduate course.

Instructor Dell has a bachelor's degree in ABC and 18 hours of graduate hours in ABC coursework (see transcript). Dr. Jones, who has a PhD in ABC, will supervise Instructor Dell and provide in-service training.

Instructor Taylor has a PhD in Astronomy. In addition to teaching Astronomy, Instructor Taylor teaches one graduate course in Physics and supervises doctoral dissertations in Physics.

Dr. Taylor has a bachelor's degree in Physics and master's degree in Physics with a specialization in Astronomy. Her dissertation for the PhD in Astronomy focused on scientific cosmology, a branch of physics that studies the structure of the universe. Dr. Taylor teaches PH 501 Classical Dynamics, a course required for graduate students seeking a master's in Physics and those seeking a master's in Physics with a specialization in Astronomy. In addition to undergraduate and graduate coursework in Physics, Dr. Taylor has authored or co-authored more than two dozen articles in both Physics and Astronomy journals and presented at national Physics and Astronomy conferences (see CV).

Approved by: Provost Kevin Whitaker, November 1, 2016