



UNIVERSITY POLICY AC-39.03-09/22

TO: The University of West Florida Community

FROM: Dr. Martha D. Saunders, President

SUBJECT: Faculty Qualifications

RESPONSIBLE OFFICE: Office of the Provost

I. Purpose:

The University of West Florida is committed to employing qualified faculty members to accomplish the mission of the University with regard to excellence in the areas of teaching and learning, research, and service.

II. Definitions:

- A. Faculty: For purposes of this policy, faculty are those who serve in an instructional capacity and are listed as Instructor of Record on at least one section of a credit-bearing academic course in a given semester, regardless of status or rank.
- B. Instructor of Record: The person qualified to teach the credit-bearing academic course and who has overall responsibility for the development and implementation of the syllabus, the achievement of student learning outcomes included as part of the syllabus, the determination of grades, and the provision of direct instruction for the course.

III. Policy:

- A. The University of West Florida employs competent faculty members qualified to accomplish the mission and goals of the institution. When determining acceptable qualifications of its faculty, UWF gives primary consideration to the highest earned degree in the discipline. The University also considers competence, effectiveness, and capacity, and, as appropriate, undergraduate and graduate degrees, professional licensure and certifications, scholarship and research, related professional experience, honors and awards, continuous documented excellence in teaching, and other demonstrated competencies and achievements that contribute to effective teaching and student learning. The University recognizes two means by which a faculty member may be qualified to serve as instructor of record for credit-bearing courses at the University:

1. By academic credentials (i.e. degrees, coursework) alone, or
2. By qualifications other than academic credentials (or combined with academic credentials) that are appropriate for teaching particular courses.

B. Designating Instructor of Record

All decisions related to instructor of record assignment should consider competence and effectiveness with primary regard given to the highest earned degree in the teaching discipline in accordance with guidelines outlined below. These guidelines apply to all instructors of record at the University, regardless of status (e.g., full-time, part-time, tenured or tenure-earning, clinical, instructor, lecturer, visiting professor, volunteer, graduate teaching assistants, etc.).

C. Qualification by Academic Credentials

Baccalaureate courses	Master's degree or higher in the teaching discipline or related discipline <i>or</i>
	Master's degree or higher with a concentration (eighteen or more graduate semester hours) in the teaching discipline or in a related discipline <i>or</i>
	Master's degree equivalency: In the absence of a completed master's degree, a concentration may also be established using acceptable documentation confirming that: (1) as part of an individual's doctoral or terminal degree program, master's degree equivalency was achieved, and (2) at least eighteen graduate semester hours in teaching discipline or in a related discipline were successfully completed.
Graduate courses	Earned doctorate or other terminal degree in the teaching discipline or related discipline.

D. Qualification by Other Demonstrated Competencies and Achievements

1. The primary consideration for qualification for all instructors of record at the University, regardless of contract type, at all levels (i.e., baccalaureate and graduate), in all programs, at all locations, and for all modalities should be academic credentials. However, qualifications other than academic credentials, or in combination with academic credentials, may be appropriate for teaching particular courses.
2. Consideration of other teaching qualifications either in conjunction with or in lieu of academic credentials is made on a case-by-case basis. Such cases are rare, and the evidence provided of other demonstrated competencies and achievements must be compelling and should be directly related to the course-level student learning

outcomes. Substantial evidence of professional progress with respect to the faculty member's teaching assignment should be included.

3. Other qualifications may include, as appropriate, relevant undergraduate and graduate degrees, related work experiences in the field, professional licensure and certifications, scholarship and research, honors and awards, continuous documented excellence in teaching, and other demonstrated competencies and achievements that contribute to effective teaching and student learning.

E. Qualifications for Graduate Teaching Assistants

1. Graduate teaching assistants may be qualified as an instructor of record by an earned master's degree or higher in the teaching discipline or in a related discipline or through a completed concentration of eighteen or more graduate semester credit hours in the teaching discipline.
2. In addition, graduate teaching assistants should be identified by their departments as high-performing graduate students in their degree program. Graduate teaching assistants must also receive direct supervision by a faculty member experienced in the teaching discipline, regular in-service training, and planned, periodic evaluations.
3. In order for a graduate student to serve as instructor of record, the graduate student must meet one of the qualifications previously mentioned and be full-time enrolled in a graduate degree program.

F. Required Documentation for Academic Credentials

1. Faculty members who are qualified to teach, either in whole or in part, by their academic credentials must have received their qualifying degree or degrees, and completed any other qualifying coursework, at an institution in the United States accredited by one of the following UWF approved accrediting agencies:
 - Higher Learning Commission (HLC)
 - Middle States Commission of Higher Education (MSCHE)
 - New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE)
 - Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU)
 - Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC)
 - Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC)

It is not sufficient for a program within an institution to be accredited; rather, the degree-granting institution itself must meet the requirement. If the qualifying

credential is from an institution outside the United States, the credential must be evaluated for US equivalency by an approved agency, even if the transcript is printed in English. For more information on credential evaluations, see UWF Graduate School guidance on Accepted Credential Evaluation Agencies.

- 2. Official transcripts reflecting successful completion of qualifying academic credentials must be provided and kept on file in the appropriate college dean’s office and stored electronically in the University’s credential management system.

G. Required Documentation for Other Demonstrated Competencies and Achievements

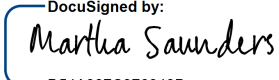
For all faculty members qualified by means other than academic credentials alone, appropriate evidence of other demonstrated competencies and achievements must be provided. Such evidence should include dates that correspond to the qualifying activities. When qualifying a faculty member on the basis of related experiences in the field, specific job titles and relevant duties should also be included in the teaching certification. Additional evidence should be provided as appropriate (e.g., copies of current licenses, awards, certificates, diplomas, portfolios).

IV. Procedures:

Procedures and Guidelines for Faculty Qualifications are managed through the Office of the Provost and are available through the Office of Institutional Effectiveness website.

V. Change Justification:

This policy has been revised and updated to reflect appropriate procedures, to reflect the updated SACSCOC Principles of Accreditation, and to replace University Policy AC-22.01-05/14 Qualifications for Faculty to Teach Graduate Courses Policy.

Approved by:  _____ Date: 09/06/2022

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Dr. Martha D. Saunders

Authority:

Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). (2018). *The Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement* (6th ed.). Decatur, GA: SACSCOC. Retrieved from <http://sacscoc.org/pdf/2018PrinciplesOfAccreditation.pdf>

Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). (2018). *Resource Manual for The Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement* (3rd ed.). Decatur, GA: SACSCOC. Retrieved from <http://sacscoc.org/pdf/2018%20POA%20Resource%20Manual.pdf>

Provost Memo to Deans Syllabi Credentials Fall 2015 http://uwf.edu/media/university-of-westflorida/colleges/cassh/documents/MEMO_SACS_Deadlines_Syllabi_Credentials_Processing_01_07_15.pdf

History: Adopted March 2015; revised December 2016; revised 09/06/2022.

Previously guidance on faculty credentials was offered through the Academic Affairs policy memo: Competence and Qualifications of Instructional Personnel Memo CAB, November 4, 2002. <https://uwf.edu/media/university-of-west-florida/colleges/cas/documents/SACSCOC-Guidelines-for-Competence-and-Qualifications-of-Instructional-Personnel.pdf>