

# Faculty Credentialing Requirement

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## Purpose

Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) Standard 6.2.a requires that the institution justifies and documents the qualifications of its faculty members. Thus, we must demonstrate that our faculty has the credentials to teach what they are asked to teach.

The SACSCOC guidelines go on to specify that *when determining acceptable qualifications of its faculty, an institution gives primary consideration to the highest earned degree in the discipline*. SACSCOC asks that *institutions ... use the following credential guidelines<sup>1</sup>*:

- Faculty teaching general education courses at the undergraduate level: doctor's 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: doctor's 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<sup>2</sup>: 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.

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<sup>1</sup> SACSCOC recommends 18-credit hours in the discipline at the graduate level; it is not a mandatory requirement. Other experiences contribute to an individual's expertise and qualification to teach specific courses. However, it is incumbent upon the institution to demonstrate the expertise and experiences do qualify as adequate credentials.

<sup>2</sup> NOTE: This language comes directly from the SACSCOC document *Faculty Credentials - Guidelines* (available from [the SACSCOC web site](#)). Unlike UT, SACSCOC does not make a distinction between Graduate Teaching Assistants

In the context of credentialing faculty, the term “faculty” is taken to include anyone who is the instructor of record for a credit-bearing course, including the following faculty categories,

- tenured and tenure-track faculty (faculty covered in Chapter Three of the Faculty Handbook);
- non-tenure track faculty, including teaching, research, clinical, practice, Extension, adjunct, and visiting (faculty covered in Chapter Four of the Faculty Handbook);
- joint faculty (Chapter Three or Four in the Faculty Handbook);
- post-doctoral students; and
- graduate teaching associates.

Graduate teaching assistants are not considered the instructor of record (person assigning the final course grade) if they only handle discussion, laboratory, studio, recitation, or other subsections of a course or proctor examinations, grade papers, or handle other tasks associated with course delivery.

Per SACSCOC guidelines, we are also to consider faculty 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.

Since UT’s 2005 reaffirmation of accreditation, SACSCOC has increased the rigor with which it enforces this standard. For all instructors-of-record, we are responsible for justifying and documenting their qualifications. During the on-site review, members of the review team may ask to see the documentation that supports the credentialing of any instructor-of-record, including transcripts, curriculum vitae, diplomas, and other evidence of qualifications. Presently, the Office of Human Resources (HR) confirms award of the terminal degree or highest earned degree through the National Student Clearinghouse. If the institution that awarded the degree is not a member of the National Student Clearinghouse, HR will directly contact the institution to confirm the degree, whether international or domestic. There is an expectation that the institution have available academic transcripts for those teaching its courses.

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and Graduate Teaching *Associates*. Since UT generally appoints graduate students who 1) have already earned a Master’s degree or 2) are admitted directly to a doctoral program and have earned the 18 graduate credit hours while at UT in the teaching discipline as Graduate Teaching Associates, these instructors of record will meet the first two qualifications and are not subject to the provisions given in the last qualifications statement. Each appointment must be clearly justified based upon the experience and expertise needed to teach a specific course.

## Transcripts, Terminal and Highest Degree Earned

### Transcripts

When a faculty search is completed, the candidate must have sent to the Office of the Provost for verification the **official transcript** of graduate course work earned while working towards the terminal degree or highest earned degree, if the terminal degree in the discipline was not earned. Transcripts clearly stamped *Issued to Student* are not acceptable. The transcript will be scanned and redacted (i.e., SSN, date of birth) prior to uploading into the IRIS personnel file with appropriate information about the faculty member's education will be added to the electronic personnel file.

Graduate students, who are instructor-of-record as listed in the timetable, must complete the Transcript Authorization Form (available at <http://sacs.utk.edu/ut-sacscoc-related-policies/>) allowing the Office of the Provost to obtain transcripts from the Office of the University Registrar and from the Graduate School for those transcripts submitted with the graduate application. These will be appropriately redacted prior to uploading into the IRIS personnel file with appropriate information about the graduate student's education added to the electronic personnel file.

### Terminal Degrees

For purposes of credentialing, besides the PhD (Doctor of Philosophy), the following doctoral-level degrees are considered the terminal degree:

- DBA – Doctor of Business Administration
- DM – Doctor of Music
- DMA – Doctor of Musical Arts
- DNP – Doctor of Nursing Practice
- DPH, DrPH – Doctor of Public Health
- DSc – Doctor of Science
- DVM, DVSc – Doctor of Veterinary Medicine, Doctor of Veterinary Science
- EdD – Doctor of Education
- JD – Juris Doctor
- PharmD – Doctor of Pharmacy
- PsyD – Doctor of Psychology

The following master's degrees are considered the terminal degree in their respective disciplines (given in parentheses):

- MArch - Master of Architecture (architecture)
- MFA - Master of Fine Arts (art, music, theatre, creative writing)
- MIA - Master of Interior Architecture (interior architecture)
- MLA - Master of Landscape Architecture (landscape architecture, plant sciences)
- MLIS, MLS, MSLS, MSIS - Master of Library and Information Science, Master of Library Science, Master of Science in Library Science, Master of Science in Information Science (information science)
- MA - Master of Arts in Product Design (interior design)

- MS - Master of Science in Graphic Design (art)
- MS - Master of Science in Industrial Design (interior design/architecture)
- MS - Master of Science in Interior Architecture (interior design/architecture)
- MPH - Master of Public Health (medical laboratory science)
- MSW, MSSW - Master of Social Work, Master of Science in Social Work (social work)

This policy applies to all tenured and tenure-track faculty and all non-tenure track faculty, including adjuncts, and graduate students who are *instructor-of-record* for courses that are or could be part of a degree program, including those with appointments in the University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture and Space Institute and dual appointments with Oak Ridge National Labs or other partners.

Credentials of all instructors-of-record, as listed in the timetable, will be verified each year. The following courses are excluded from credentialing:

## Courses Excluded from Credentialing

**Agriculture and Natural Resources 100:** Student Success in the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources (1 credit hour): AGNR 100 focuses on orientation and integration into the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources with emphases in academic and career planning, self-exploration, college success strategies, professional development, and co-curricular engagement. An outcome of the course is for students to gain knowledge and experiences that will enhance their transition to college and strategies for holistic college success. The course is taught by the Director for Advising.

**Business Administration 100:** Approaches to the College of Business Administration (1 credit hour): BUAD 100 focuses on introducing students into the College of Business Administration. It emphasizes academic and career planning, college success strategies, and professional development. Instructors are predominately College of Business Administration (CBA) academic advisors. Professional staff members from the Center for Career Development and the Programs Abroad Office, who work with CBA students in their regular duties, may also teach sections of BUAD. The Office of Undergraduate Programs in the CBA conduct training sessions for instructors to help ensure they understand the student learning outcomes for the course. The Director of Undergraduate Programs also reviews credentials to ensure the instructors have the appropriate experience and a master's degree.

**First Year Studies 100, 101, and 129:** The primary courses offered by First-Year Studies, FYS 100, FYS 101, and FYS 129, credential and train instructors through three different processes.

**FYS 100:** The Volunteer Connection (0 credit hours) is primarily an online course that serves as an extension of orientation and a curricular home for the first-year common reading program. Instructional content delivery and grading is overseen by the Director of First-Year Studies with support of the First-Year Studies staff. The final component of FYS 100 is an in-person discussion on the common reading book conducted by a UT Discussion Leader. All Discussion Leaders are full-time University of Tennessee faculty and staff. Each Discussion Leader attends a two-hour workshop on how to facilitate discussion on the selected book.

**FYS 101:** The UT Experience (1 credit hour) is an in-person course on student success taught by full-time UT staff or faculty. All FYS 101 instructors must have an earned master's degree from an accredited university. FYS 101 instructors must attend a half-day workshop on course curriculum and pedagogy.

**FYS 129:** First-Year Seminar (1 credit hour) is a topic-based, in-person course designed to engage students in learning in a small setting with a tenure-line faculty member. All FYS 129 instructors are tenured or tenure-track faculty. The Director of First-Year Studies chooses offerings after a review of proposals. Each proposal is required to present a description of the course content and design.

**University Honors 101:** Chancellor's Honors First-Year Seminar (1 credit hour): UNHO 101 is a fall course, typically limited to 22 students per section and required of all first-year participants in the Chancellor's Honors Program (CHP). Topics vary, and are chosen by instructors. Instructors are solicited through an open application process. Although most instructors are faculty, occasionally, full-time staff members volunteer to teach UNHO sections. Staff members, if chosen, must demonstrate the appropriate educational and experiential background for the proposed topic. Faculty members volunteering for the first time submit an application that describes the proposed topic and a copy of their curriculum vitae. University Honors Staff review applications based on interesting and engaging topics that are focused enough for a 1-hour course yet broad enough for a general audience of first-year students. Faculty members who propose a topic unrelated to their academic disciplines may be asked to provide additional information regarding qualifications for teaching the proposed topic. Returning and new instructors are required to attend one training meeting during the spring or the summer, in order to review how to best meet the goals for this course and about what to expect from first-semester honors students in a 1-hour course. Follow-up during the semester includes a class visit by an honors staff person and surveys of students.

**Thesis, Dissertation, and Use of Facilities Courses:** The Graduate School and the Office of the University Registrar reserves course numbers 500, 502, and 600 for thesis, use of facilities, and dissertation, respectively. Department heads and directors of graduate studies have the responsibility to assign graduate students to faculty mentors for graduate studies. For approval to direct dissertations, the Graduate School requires faculty credentials be reviewed by a faculty committee of the Graduate Council. The procedure to obtain [approval to direct dissertations](#) is posted at the Graduate School and Graduate Council websites. There is an expectation that the faculty member has been actively involved with the supervision of research or creative activity and has an active program and record of scholarship. Only those nominations that are affirmed by the Credentials Committee are forwarded to the Graduate Council for approval. Once a faculty member reaches the rank of full professor, credential review occurs every 10 years.

**Thesis (500) and Dissertation (600)** hours are used when the student is actively completing the thesis or dissertation. When working on the research that will contribute to the thesis or dissertation, students may be enrolled in a course designated specifically to account for the time spent in conducting the research or other scholarly work. **Use of facilities (502)** is required for the student not otherwise

registered during any semester when student uses university facilities and/or faculty time before degree is completed.

**Physical education courses (PYED)** require an explanation as to why a person is qualified to teach the specific activity. These will be credentialed based on other experiences and not graduate or undergraduate course work in the activity.

## Alternate Credentialing

On occasion, the person responsible for course instruction does not hold a terminal degree within the discipline or a related discipline. Therefore, alternate credentialing is required which entails an explanation of relevant professional experiences, teaching at other universities, awards and other distinctions, or other information that helps explain why the person is qualified to teach the course so assigned.

At the time of hiring, if the person does not have the terminal degree, a statement of alternate credentials should be prepared, approved by the appropriate department head, and added to the IRIS HR file.

The statement should include the anticipated courses the person will teach, what their education is (degree, date of award, discipline, institution), and an explanation of the qualifications of the person. Provide as much detail as is necessary to demonstrate competence for the specific courses being assigned.

## Examples

Below are examples of alternate credentials submitted with the 2015 Focused Report associated with the 2015 Reaffirmation.

<b>Courses taught (G=Graduate, UT=Undergraduate, Transferable)</b>	<b>Education</b>	<b>Other qualifications and comments</b>
<b>Issue: graduate level course; person does not have a terminal degree</b>		
ARCH 525: Spaces of Memory (3) (G)	Master of Arts, 2000, Product Design (DNSEP), ESAD de Reims, France Bachelor of Interior Design (D.E.S.), 1996, Ecole des Beaux Arts, Paris	Professional experience: design juror in interior design at Pratt Institute, Brooklyn, NY; design projects in Rotterdam and in Shenzhen, China while with OMA (Rem Koolhaas); project designer in NYC with Gensler (projects included MetLife, NYC, Goldman Sachs, NYC, Citibank, Baltimore, McCarthy, Montreal, and Ziff Brothers, NYC, ranging in size from 150,000 square feet to 750,000 square feet); creative director with Lemay & Assoc., Montreal, Quebec; senior designer with Keops & Rarek Ali Ridah, including King Abdullah residence (King of Saudi Arabia, Al Riyadh), An-Nakhil Royal Mall, Kuwait City, Princess Adila resident, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. Awarded first prize for exhibitions at

International Interior Design Show, Canada; Interior Design Magazine, NY; and Athenaeum Museum, Chicago.

**Issue: teaching undergraduate courses without a graduate degree in the discipline**

<p>THEA 242: Fundamentals of Costume Design and Technology (3) (UT)</p>	<p>Bachelor of Arts, 1995, Theatre and English, College of William and Mary Costume Internship, Julliard School, NYC</p>	<p>Professional costume experience: Lynne Mackey Studio, New York (supervisor, Millinery Shop, for productions of <i>Spamalot</i>, <i>Wicked</i>, <i>Mamma Mia</i>, <i>Chitty Chitty Bang Bang</i>, <i>Kiss Me Kate</i> and <i>Fiddler on the Roof</i>), Daniel Wallace Ltd. (costumer), and Glimmerglass Opera, Washington Opera, and Arena Stage (costume crafts with these three production companies). Costume Shop Supervisor, UT Clarence Brown Theatre: oversees and facilitates all aspects of costume production, wigs, makeup and wardrobe. Prior to her employment at the University of Tennessee, she worked in New York for 10 years as a Milliner, Crafts Artisan, Dyer and Assistant Designer. In 2012, presented a workshop in Millinery Trim techniques at the Tennessee Theatre Association Conference at Maryville College.</p>
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**Issue: teaching a graduate level course without a terminal degree in the discipline**

<p>STAT 583: Special Topics: Applied Statistics (3) (G)</p>	<p>Master of Science, 2004, Statistics, University of Tennessee, Knoxville</p>	<p>WebShare, LLC - Web Analytics, Search and Conversion Marketing Firm, Consultant and Chief Statistician, 2007 - 2010; involved in performing data analysis and website design and optimization. Intel, Research and Development Statistician in Assembly Technology Development, 2004 - 2007 Also, held training responsibilities with both companies. With WebShare, conducted the Google Seminar for Success, teaching clients fundamentals of web analytics, testing, and usability. At Intel, trained engineers in statistics and change control process; as part of this duty, she helped revise the training manuals used to teach the courses. NOTE: course is primarily an undergraduate course; cross-listed for graduate students who want to become Google certified; graduate students receive only 1.5 hours of credit.</p>
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**Issue: teaching upper-division courses without a terminal degree or graduate degree in the discipline**

<p>ME 450: Mechanical Engineering Design I (3) (UT) ME 460: Mechanical Engineering Design II (2) (UT)</p>	<p>Bachelor of Science, 1977, Mechanical Engineering, University of Tennessee,</p>	<p>Licensed Professional Engineer, State of Kentucky, P.E. license 12760 Was hired specifically to teach the departmental senior design course sequence, ME 450 and 460, based on his extensive industrial experience with Lexmark International (1991-</p>
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ME 495: Special Project/ System Design (1) (UT)	Knoxville	2010, mechanical systems architect, chief engineer, senior technical staff member) and IBM (1977-1991, senior product design engineer) and established track record for development of new concepts evidenced from his 38 US patents, 2 European patents, and 6 pending patents. He has expertise in product development, design, testing, and intellectual property development that is ideal for the senior design process (recipient of 15 design and technical achievement awards). He is not expected to or asked to teach any other courses in the curriculum.
<b>Issue: teaching undergraduate courses without a graduate degree in the discipline</b>		
MUED 240: Class String Methods I (1) (UT) MUED 241: Class String Methods II (1) (UT)  MUED=Music Education	Bachelor of Music, with a concentration in Music Education, 1992, University of Tennessee, Knoxville	Courses are for music education students who may or may not have experience with stringed instruments; therefore, the instructor of these courses must also teach the students how to play the instruments. Besides the B.M. with a concentration in Music Education, she is a certified extended Suzuki instructor having attended Institute and Leadership Retreats in Virginia, Washington, Florida, Georgia, Colorado, and Arkansas. Professional experiences include teaching strings in a private studio setting, and being the conductor and general manager of the Knoxville Youth Symphony Orchestra Association.

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Revised September 2014: addition of acceptable degrees and course exceptions

Revised February 2017: 1) additional information for alternate credentialing used for “Other Qualifications and Comments”; 2) inclusion of post-doctoral students in the list of people who are to be credentialed when given course teaching assignments; 3) revised list of acceptable terminal degrees

Revised June 2017: minor revision to list of acceptable terminal degrees

Updated 2018: to reflect new *Principles of Accreditation*.