

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA WILMINGTON  
ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

FACULTY CREDENTIALING POLICY

I. DOCUMENTATION OF FACULTY COMPETENCE:

Under most circumstances, full-time and part-time faculty who are instructors of record for courses that could meet requirements for a degree or certificate program are expected to meet the faculty credentialing guidelines indicated by SACS COC (below) and submitted on the [Certification of Credentials and Qualifications form](#). However, we recognize that limited exceptions to these guidelines may be needed to meet specific instructional requirements related to the mission of UNCW and student learning outcomes for specific courses.

To insure that the university employs only fully qualified faculty members, the Chair of the employing department must justify in writing the employment of each full-time or part-time faculty member who lacks at least a master's degree in the field of instruction, or for graduate instruction, lacks the terminal degree. The justification must indicate the course(s) to be taught by the faculty member and must indicate the faculty member's expertise in relation to the learning objectives of these courses. The justification must include all relevant professional training, work experience, and evidence of recognition of competence by peers within the teaching field. The justification must be supported by external documentation, such as employer references on company or institutional letterhead stationery, awards, prizes, publications, or other recognition of performance in the subject that the faculty member is to teach. The chair's justification must be approved by the appropriate dean and Academic Affairs, and must be maintained in the official Academic Affairs personnel file of the faculty member.

II. ACCREDITATION REQUIREMENTS:

**SACS Comprehensive Standard:**

SACS COC requires that each accredited member institution employ competent faculty members (tenured and tenure track faculty as well as non tenure track and part-time faculty) qualified to accomplish the mission and goals of the institution, as indicated in Comprehensive Standard 3.7.1:

C.S. 3.7.1 "The institution employs competent faculty members qualified to accomplish the mission and goals of the institution. When determining acceptable qualifications of its faculty, an institution 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 justifying and documenting the qualifications of its faculty. (*See Commission guidelines "Faculty Credentials."*) (**Faculty competence**)"

**SACS Guidelines:**

In keeping with this standard, SACS COC provides the following guidelines for credentialing of faculty responsible for course instruction (instructor of record):

- 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.

An institution may also consider other experience in determining faculty competence, including as appropriate undergraduate and graduate degrees, related work experience, professional licensure and certifications, honors and awards, professional recognition, continuous documented excellence in teaching, or other documented competency and achievement that would relate to effective teaching and student learning. However, for all cases the institution is responsible for justifying and documenting the qualifications of its faculty.

III. REFERENCES:

- [UNCW Policy 08.150 Verification of Academic and Professional Credentials](#)
- SACSCOC, [The Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement](#) (for Comprehensive Standard 3.7.1)
- SACSCOC guidelines, "[Faculty Credentials](#)"
- [UNCW Certification of Credentials and Qualifications form](#)

Approved by Academic Coordinating Council, January 11, 2011.