



Faculty Credentials Process: Implementation Guide

Developed by
Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (OIRA)
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Information

Overview

The published Faculty Credentials Policy articulates the expectations for faculty qualifications and their documentation. This guide is intended to provide more detailed information and examples for those completing the documentation. The intent of these changes is to ensure that information on faculty qualifications and course assignments is collected and reported along the way. This should facilitate both better accountability and more efficient reporting.

As described in this policy, qualifications, such as education and experience, need to be documented for each course instructor at UAH, including full-time faculty, part-time faculty, and GTAs. The appropriate credentialing forms and copies of any documentation need to be processed and on file.

Credentialing Forms

Three different versions of the Faculty Credentials form exist, depending on the type of faculty member:

- the Full-time Faculty Credentials form,
- the Part-time Faculty Credentials form, and
- the Graduate Teaching Assistant Credentials Certification

All three of these forms typically start at the department chair level and then go to approval by the appropriate dean. From there, some forms go directly to OIRA while others go first to Graduate Studies or the Provost, depending on the level of qualifications and the course assignments, before OIRA.

These forms are intended to be completed after each new full-time faculty hire, each new part-time faculty hire, or each new GTA assignment. Forms on current full-time faculty, part-time faculty, and GTAs may be completed at any time; however, OIRA recommends that they be completed as the faculty member is identified in the Faculty Credentials Audit. [Completed Faculty Credentials Forms should be send to the OIRA office by email, preferably to the assessment email at assessment@uah.edu.](mailto:assessment@uah.edu)

The Full-time Faculty Credentials form and the Part-time Faculty Credentials form are managed by OIRA and replace the Faculty Roster Form. The Faculty Roster form no longer has to be completed, once the Full-time Faculty Credentials and the Part-time Faculty Credentials form have been implemented. Additional instructions and examples for these forms are provided later in this guide.

The Graduate Teaching Assistants Credentials Certificate is already being used in most departments and colleges and is processed through the Graduate Studies. OIRA will access the information from this form through Graduate Studies as needed.

Faculty Credentials Audit

The Faculty Credentials Audit, completed midway through each semester, is the key component in this new process and is completed using the Credentialing Module of Compliance Assist, the same software used for the Assessment Plan and Report process. To begin this process, OIRA has entered the qualifications and courses credentialed to teach for each faculty member based on the Faculty Roster

completed for the 2016 SACSCOC visit. OIRA then enters similar information from each completed Faculty Credentials form as they are submitted. This information will be compared to the course assignments for the semester as listed in Banner.

From this, OIRA generates a list by college and department of any full-time faculty, part-time faculty, or GTAs who do not have credential documentation on file for one or more of their assigned course. OIRA then sends each list to the appropriate dean's office for dissemination and review. (The college dean can request that this information also be sent to the individual departments, if desired.) The relevant department chairs and deans then work to provide the appropriate new or updated Faculty Credentials forms to OIRA. At the end of the semester, OIRA runs a follow-up audit to ensure that the needed documentation is on file for every course assignment for each faculty member.

Graduate Status

For faculty teaching graduate coursework, an additional step to ensure Graduate Status needs to be completed through Graduate Studies. OIRA verifies that status with Graduate Studies as part of the Faculty Credentials Audit; however, that process is completely under the purview of Graduate Studies.

Hiring Process

These credentialing forms do not replace existing processes and forms for hiring new faculty. The credentialing form is typically completed separately, after the hiring process is complete.

Recommendations

OIRA recommends the following strategies to ensure an efficient, effective process.

1. Any individual whose name appears on the published course schedule needs to have their credentials documented through the appropriate form. This includes full-time faculty, part-time faculty, GTAs, or other department-specific or college-specific categories of instructor.
2. The course listing in Section II of the Full-time Faculty Credentials form or the Part-time Faculty Credentials form should include all the courses the individual is qualified to teach, even if they are not part of their typical course load. The more complete the information is on this form, the less likely it is that another one will need to be submitted in the future.
3. Typically, the Full-time Faculty Credentials form or the Part-time Faculty Credentials form is completed only once for each full-time or part-time faculty member. The key here is to make sure that all the courses the faculty member is qualified to teach are included in Section II the first time it is submitted: courses the faculty member typically teaches as well as other courses they could teach but typically do not. Then, the form just has to be completed one time and only needs to be updated if the faculty member's credentials change (i.e. complete additional degree or certificate).
4. The Full-time Faculty Credentials form, the Part-time Faculty Credentials form, the GTA Credentials Certification, and any supporting documents need to be submitted electronically. If the process is typically paper, then the easiest way to do it to scan the completed paper documents, including any supporting documents like CVs or transcripts. If the process is typically handled electronically, then the final version of the form with any supporting documents can just be forwarded to the OIRA office at assessment@uah.edu.

Instructions and Examples

Section I. Summary of Credentials

This section is completed only if the full-time or part-time faculty member is a new hire to fill a posted position. For each category (Education, Experience, Other), the expectations at each level, Minimum and Preferred, should be summarized, and the comments should indicate the faculty member's relevant qualifications.

Example I.A: New Hire

This full-time job posting called for a master's degree and 1 year teaching experience as the minimum qualification with a PhD, 3 years teaching experience, and lab safety certification preferred. These requirements are listed in the Minimum and Preferred columns, respectively. The faculty member who was hired for the position had a PhD, 2 years of teaching experience, and the certificate in process. This is documented in the Comments column.

JOB REQUIREMENT AS ADVERTISED			COMMENTS
Description		Minimum Preferred	
Education		MS PhD	Has PhD
Type(s) of Job Experience	1	1 year teaching experience 3 years teaching experience	Has 2 years
	2		
	3		
Other Knowledge, Skills Or Characteristics		Safety certification	In process

Example I.B: Re-Hire

This part-time faculty member has taught Freshmen Comp in the past but did not last year because of a scheduling conflict. However, they have been hired to teach a section for the fall. Since the last time they taught was before this new process was implemented, a Part-time Faculty Credentials form needs to be completed for this individual. However, since this is not a new hire, the table in Section I can be left blank.

Section II. Courses Credentialed to Teach as Instructor of Record

This section is the list of the specific courses, course groups, or course categories that the faculty member is considered credentialed to teach based on their degrees and experience. The list should include enough information for OIRA staff to identify the specific individual courses included.

Example II.A: Credentials by Degree

Part 1. A faculty member with a PhD in Microbiology is hired full-time, with BYS 202, 321, and 322 as the typical teaching assignment. Since this means the faculty member has a terminal degree in the discipline, they fall under category #1 and could be listed as credentialed for the courses listed below.

1. Based on a terminal degree or non-terminal graduate degree in discipline. (See I.D.1 in Faculty Credential Policy.)

all 100-level BYS courses
all undergraduate Microbiology courses
also research/thesis courses at the undergrad level

OIRA interprets “all 100-level BYS courses” to mean these courses:

BYS 100 - INTRO HEALTH PROFESSIONS
BYS 103 - PRINCIPLES OF BIOLOGY
BYS 111 - ANATOMY & PHYSIOLOGY I
BYS 112 - ANATOMY & PHYSIOLOGY II
BYS 112A - HUMAN ANATOMY-PHYS II
BYS 112L - ANATOMY & PHYSIOLOGY II
BYS 119 - PRINCIPLES OF BIOLOGY
BYS 119L - LABORATORY
BYS 119R - BYS 119 RECITATION
BYS 120 - ORGANISMAL BIOLOGY
BYS 120L - ORGANISMAL BIOLOGY LAB
BYS 120R - BYS 120 RECITATION

OIRA interprets “all undergraduate Microbiology courses” to mean these courses:

BYS 202 - STATISTICS MICROBIOLOGY
BYS 220 - GENERAL MICROBIOLOGY
BYS 241 - GENERAL MICROBIOLOGY
BYS 321 - GENERAL MICROBIOLOGY I
BYS 322 - GENERAL MICROBIOLOGY II
BYS 322L - GENERAL MICROBIOLOGY II LAB

OIRA interprets “also research/thesis courses at the undergrad level” to mean these courses:

BYS 492 - UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH
BYS 499 - UNGRAD HONORS RES & THESIS

Part 2. If this faculty member may be called on periodically to teach graduate courses in the field or supervise graduate student research, their course groups could include graduate courses as well as undergraduate as listed below. However, before the faculty member is assigned to teach one or more graduate courses, they would need to be approved from Graduate Status through the Graduate Studies office. During the Faculty Credentials Audit for that semester, OIRA would verify Graduate Studies for that faculty member through the Graduate Studies office.

1. Based on a terminal degree or non-terminal graduate degree in discipline. (See I.D.1 in Faculty Credential Policy.)

all 100-level BYS courses
 all undergraduate and graduate Microbiology courses
 also research, thesis, and dissertation courses at the graduate and undergraduate level

OIRA interprets “all 100-level BYS courses” to mean these courses:

- BYS 100 - INTRO HEALTH PROFESSIONS
- BYS 103 - PRINCIPLES OF BIOLOGY
- BYS 111 - ANATOMY & PHYSIOLOGY I
- BYS 112 - ANATOMY & PHYSIOLOGY II
- BYS 112A - HUMAN ANATOMY-PHYS II
- BYS 112L - ANATOMY & PHYSIOLOGY II
- BYS 119 - PRINCIPLES OF BIOLOGY
- BYS 119L - LABORATORY
- BYS 119R - BYS 119 RECITATION
- BYS 120 - ORGANISMAL BIOLOGY
- BYS 120L - ORGANISMAL BIOLOGY LAB
- BYS 120R - BYS 120 RECITATION

NOTE: NO CHANGE FROM THE PREVIOUS LIST.

OIRA interprets “all undergraduate and graduate Microbiology courses” to mean these courses:

- BYS 202 - STATISTICS MICROBIOLOGY
- BYS 220 - GENERAL MICROBIOLOGY
- BYS 241 - GENERAL MICROBIOLOGY
- BYS 321 - GENERAL MICROBIOLOGY I
- BYS 322 - GENERAL MICROBIOLOGY II
- BYS 322L - GENERAL MICROBIOLOGY II LAB
- BYS 535 - ADVANCED MICROBIOLOGY

NOTE: ONE NEW GRAD COURSE ADDED

OIRA interprets “also research/thesis courses at the graduate and undergrad level” to mean these courses:

- BYS 492 - UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH
- BYS 499 - UNGRAD HONORS RES & THESIS
- BYS 692 - RESEARCH
- BYS 699 - MASTER'S THESIS

NOTE: TWO NEW GRAD COURSES ADDED

Example II.B: Credentials by Degree & Coursework

A faculty member has an MA in American Literature along with 24 hours towards an MA in Linguistics and typically teaches EH 336, EH 430 and EHL 405. This faculty member would have credentials listed under both Category 1 (for the terminal degree) and under Category 2 (coursework in a related discipline). This faculty member could be credentialed as follows.

1. Based on a terminal degree or non-terminal graduate degree in discipline. (See I.D.1 in Faculty Credential Policy.)

undergraduate American Literature courses
lower-level general literature courses

2. Based on a graduate degree (master's or above) in another discipline PLUS 18 hours graduate level coursework in the discipline. (See I.D.2 in Faculty Credential Policy.)

undergraduate linguistics courses

List below the specific, relevant 18 hours of coursework completed by the faculty member.

LING-512 Phonetics and Phonology III (3); LING-529 Generative Syntax III (3);
LING-531 Semantics & Pragmatics I (3); LING-532 Semantics and Pragmatics II (3);
LING-553 Intro to SLA/Bilingualism (3); LING-567 Advanced Language Testing (3);
LING-570 Introduction to Sociolinguistics (3); LING-584 Statistics for Linguistics Research (3)

OIRA interprets "undergraduate American Literature courses" to mean these courses:

EH 336 - SURVEY AMERICAN LITERATURE
EH 429 - STUDIES IN AMERICAN CINEMA
EH 430 - THE AMERICAN NOVEL
EH 432 - AMERICAN LITERARY MODERNISM
EH 435 - SPECIAL STUDIES AMERICAN LIT
EH 437 - THE AMERICAN NINETEENTH CNTRY
EH 438 - AFRICAN AMERICAN LITERATURE
EH 439 - ETHNIC AMERICAN NOVEL

OIRA interprets "lower-level general literature courses" to mean these courses:

EH 207 - READINGS LITERATURE/CULTURE I
EH 208 - READINGS LITERATURE/CULTURE 2
EH 209 - HONORS SEM READINGS LIT/CUL I
EH 210 - HONORS SEM READINGS LIT/CUL 2

OIRA interprets "undergraduate linguistics courses" to mean these courses:

EHL 405 - SUR GEN LINGUISTICS:APP ENG I
EHL 406 - CRITICAL ISSUES
EHL 407 - ADV EH GRAM:APP LINGUISTICS II
EHL 409 - SPEC STUDIES: APPL LINGUISTICS

Courses from the faculty member's own transcript, not UAH courses.

Example II.C: Credentials by Experience

A part-time faculty member has a master's degree in History and has taught high school history for 20 years. Based on this degree and experience, this faculty member could be credentialed as follow.

3. Based on experience in the discipline or related field, if required. (See I.D.3 in Faculty Credential Policy.) PROVOST APPROVAL REQUIRED.

ED 424 - TCHG SOC ST MID & SEC SCHOOLS

Since the faculty member's experience, in addition to the degree, forms the basis for the credential, a letter from the department chair is required in Section III and an additional step—Provost approval—is required in Section IV.

Section III. Supporting Documentation

This section is for any documentation that needs to be provided to OIRA regarding the faculty member. All documents are to be provided electronically, typically as scanned pdfs.

For full-time faculty, OIRA can access the documentation in the faculty member's personnel file in the Provost office. This generally covers all of the documentation requirements except for two situations.

1. If the documentation is new or changed from what is in the personnel file, then that new or changed documentation needs to be included.
2. If the credentialing is based on experience (Section II #3), then a letter from the department chair is required as supporting documentation. If this credentialing is for graduate courses, a second letter, from the Graduate Studies Dean, is also required.

For part-time faculty, a transcript typically needs to be included, at a minimum. For new hires, copies of the resume and reference letters should also be included. In addition, the same letters are required for credentialing based on experience (Section II #3) for part-time faculty as for full-time faculty.

Example III.A: Full-time

A faculty member with a PhD and 2 years of experience is hired for a full-time position. Their transcript, CV, and reference letters are all in their personnel file in the Provost office. This means that no supporting documentation is needed, and Section III can be left blank.

Example III.B: Part-time

This part-time faculty member has taught Freshmen Comp in the past but did not last year because of a scheduling conflict. However, they have been hired to teach a section for the fall. Since this is based on their degrees, transcripts are the primary supporting documentation that needs to be included with the Part-time Faculty Credentials form, as shown below.

SECTION III. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Submit any required documentation electronically with this form.

- Biographical sketch or current resume
- Transcripts of all academic work, undergraduate and graduate.
- Letters of reference
- Letter from the Department Chair on experience qualifications, if required (Section II #3)
- Letter from the Graduate Studies Dean on experience qualifications, if required (Section II #3)
- Other Pertinent Information as described below:

Example III.C: Experience

A part-time faculty member has a master's degree in History and has taught high school history for 20 years. This faculty member is being credentialed to teach one undergraduate course based on this degree and experience.

● Since this is a new hire of a part-time faculty member, the resume, transcript and letters of reference are all required as supporting documentation.

Since this faculty member is being credentialed based on experience, the letter from the department chair is required. ●

SECTION III. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Submit any required documentation electronically with this form.

- Biographical sketch or current resume
- Transcripts of all academic work, undergraduate and graduate.
- Letters of reference
- Letter from the Department Chair on experience qualifications, if required (Section II #3)
- Letter from the Graduate Studies Dean on experience qualifications, if required (Section II #3)
- Other Pertinent Information as described below:

Section IV. Approvals

This section is to ensure that each Full-time Faculty Credentials and Part-time Faculty Credentials form has been reviewed and approved by the appropriate administrators. All forms require approval of the department chair and the appropriate dean. Most forms can be sent directly from the dean's office to OIRA.

The only time the form should be sent from the dean's office to the Provost office for approval is if the faculty member is being credentialed based on experience (Section II #3). If the credential is approved, the Provost office will send the form on to OIRA. In the event the credential is not approved, the Provost will return it to the appropriate dean for further review.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Why is a new process being implemented?

A: The recent SACSCOC visit highlighted the need for change in this area in several ways. First, faculty and staff put in a tremendous amount of work to prepare the Faculty Roster as part of the Compliance Certification. It was determined that this could be mitigated for the future by collecting that information along the way, as faculty are hired, rather than waiting to do it all at once. In addition, the high level of scrutiny from the SACS COC reviewers to that section indicates its increasing importance in the accreditation process. Additional protections and safeguards for department chairs and college deans seemed in order to ensure that there are no surprises at the next visit.

Q: What about the processes we already have in place?

A: The process for credentials for GTAs stays the same, with the GTA Credentials Certification completed through the Graduate Studies office. For full-time and part-time faculty, the Full-time Faculty Credentials form and the Part-time Faculty Credentials form replace the current Faculty Roster Form. Since the Faculty Roster Form is completed every semester but the Faculty Credentials Forms are only completed once per faculty member, it is hoped that the new process will result in an overall workload reduction.

Any information already documented on a Faculty Roster Form and submitted to OIRA prior to this new process will not need to be redone. This includes the Faculty Roster Forms that were part of the documentation for the 2016 SACSCOC visit.

Q: Who does this process cover?

A: Any individual whose name appears on the published course schedule as a course instructor needs to be documented through this process. This typically includes whoever is providing primary instruction to the students in the course. This does not include guest speakers, student assistants who grade papers, lab assistants who prep materials, or chairs/deans listed as course faculty for administrative access.

Q: What do we need to do for current faculty?

A: No paperwork needs to be done on current faculty immediately, since some documentation has already been completed for them on the existing Faculty Roster Forms. The Faculty Credentials Audit completed each semester provides the opportunity to identify current faculty teaching courses not on the Faculty Roster Form. From the Audit, OIRA notifies the appropriate College and a Full-time Faculty Credentials form or a Part-time Faculty Credentials form must then be completed by the appropriate department.

Q: What about new full-time or part-time faculty hires?

A: For new faculty who are hired, the Full-time Faculty Credentials form or the Part-time Faculty Credentials must be completed after the hiring process. For part-time faculty who do not teach every year, the Part-time Faculty Credentials form is not required again after the first time, unless the faculty member is hired to teach courses not already included on their form.

Q: What about GTAs?

A: the GTA Credentials Certification is required through the Graduate Studies office. OIRA accesses the information on this form once the approval through Graduate Studies is complete.

More Questions? Contact Ginny Cockerill at gdc0004@uah.edu or x. 6254.