

**Northwestern State University**  
**Credit Faculty Qualifications Verification Process**  
**Effective Fall 2014**

**Verification of Faculty Credentials**

The verification of faculty credentials process requires official transcripts for each relevant degree earned by all teaching faculty (including full-time, part-time, and adjunct faculty) and must be on file in the Academic Affairs Office.

*The Verification of Faculty Credentials Form* should be completed by the faculty member and department head/coordinator/director who directly supervises the faculty member. This form is based on faculty credentialing guidelines set forth by the Commission on Colleges, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACSCOC). This form establishes an initial review at the department/school/college level, including response to specific credentialing questions and transcript analysis.

As part of the verification, graduate hours in each teaching field (discipline) must be calculated or verified. In some situations, credentials applications may be reviewed for more than one discipline area. Review and approval by each of the appropriate academic supervisors must be attained.

Deadline for filing credentialing documents for the spring semester would always be **December 1** of the semester prior; deadline for the summer semester would always be **May 1** of the semester prior; and deadline for the fall semester would be **August 1**. **The Registrar's Office will not assign classes to any faculty member who has not completed the credentialing process.** Occasionally, a circumstance beyond the institution's control (faculty resigns or becomes ill right before the beginning of a semester) occurs and the deadline may not be met. In these circumstances, all efforts must be made to file credentials as soon as possible.

From these completed forms, a *Roster of Instructional Staff* will be generated each semester, documenting all credentials.

SACSCOC acknowledges an institution's prerogative to justify exceptions to the established guidelines for faculty credentials. When providing justification, the following guidelines should be used (*COC/SACS, February 2001*).

- A. The institution demonstrates that it has made sufficient attempts to seek and hire qualified faculty with appropriate highest degrees in the discipline, and
- B. The institution demonstrates appropriate competence and experience for all faculty members teaching courses for which they do not meet minimum credentialing guidelines of the criteria, and
- C. The institution demonstrates that student outcomes in courses taught by faculty not meeting the standard credentialing guidelines are comparable to those outcomes in courses taught by faculty meeting those requirements.

Faculty who are credentialed do not have to be re-credentialed UNLESS there are additions/deletions to their application. Verification of the currency of the document would be the responsibility of the department head/director/dean who directly supervises the faculty member.

## **Guidelines for Verifying and Documenting Faculty Credentials**

*\*SACS Principles of Accreditation, Effective January 2007*

**Official transcripts** for the degree used for credentialing must be on file or accompany initial appointment.

**At least 25% of the discipline course hours in each undergraduate major are taught by faculty members holding the terminal degree—usually the doctorate—in the discipline.**

### **Faculty teaching general education courses at the undergraduate level:**

- Doctoral degree in teaching discipline, or
- Master's degree in teaching discipline or
- Master's degree with a concentration in the teaching discipline (a minimum of 18 graduate hours in the teaching discipline)

### **Faculty teaching associate degree courses designed for transfer to a baccalaureate degree:**

- Doctoral degree in teaching discipline or
- Master's degree in teaching discipline or
- Master's degree with a concentration in the teaching discipline (a minimum of 18 graduate hours in the teaching discipline)

### **Faculty teaching associate degree courses not designed for transfer to the baccalaureate degree:**

- Baccalaureate degree in teaching discipline or associate degree and demonstrated competencies in the field.

### **Faculty teaching baccalaureate degree courses (not applicable to faculty teaching physical education activities courses):**

- Doctoral degree in teaching discipline or
- Master's degree in teaching discipline or
- Master's degree with a concentration in the teaching discipline (a minimum of 18 graduate hours in the teaching discipline)

### **Faculty teaching graduate and post-baccalaureate course work – Graduate faculty:**

- Earned doctorate/terminal degree in the teaching discipline or a related discipline.

### **Graduate teaching assistants (who have primarily responsibility for a course):**

- Master's degree in teaching discipline or
- 18 graduate semester hours in the teaching discipline, direct supervision by a credentialed faculty member, experience in the teaching discipline, regular in-service training, and planned and periodic evaluations.

## **Additional Guidelines and Requirements for Credentialing**

- **Developmental Courses:** Faculty members teaching remedial courses must hold a baccalaureate degree in a discipline related to their teaching assignment and have either teaching experience in a discipline related to their assignment or graduate training in remedial education.
  
- **Baccalaureate Courses:** It is the responsibility of the university to justify the master's degree (as the terminal degree) or a master's degree coupled with a related doctorate as the terminal degree in the teaching discipline. In exceptional cases, outstanding professional experience and demonstrated contributions to the teaching discipline may be presented in lieu of formal academic preparation. Documentation to justify such a privilege must be reviewed and maintained. *Faculty teaching physical education activities do not have to have the master's degree or graduate hours.*
  
- **Graduate Courses:** The Commission recognizes that in unusual cases institutions may appropriately include as graduate faculty members those who have demonstrated exceptional scholarly or creative activity, or professional experience, but who may not possess the required academic credentials. There also may be an occasion when a new graduate discipline is in its formative stage in higher education and there are no faculty members available with academic credentials in the discipline. In either case, when an institution presents evidence of competence or academic credentials other than the doctorate in the discipline for its graduate faculty, it must justify the employment of such faculty. All faculty teaching courses at the doctoral level must hold the earned doctorate in the teaching discipline or a related discipline. For each graduate degree program, an institution must employ at least four qualified full-time faculty members whose responsibilities include teaching in the program. Part-time faculty who teach courses for credit must meet the same requirements for professional, experiential and scholarly preparation as their full-time counterparts teaching in the same disciplines. Each institution must establish and publish comprehensive policies concerning the employment of part-time faculty. It must also provide for appropriate orientation, supervision and evaluation of all part-time faculty members. Procedures to ensure student access to part-time faculty members must be clearly stated and publicized.
  
- **Graduate Teaching Assistants.** These requirements do not apply to assisting instructors with courses or teaching physical education activity courses. Institutions may appoint graduate teaching assistants for whom English is a second language only when a test of spoken English or other reliable evidence of the applicant's proficiency in oral and written communication indicates that the appointment is appropriate. Institutions must provide structure for administrative oversight at a level above that of the individual academic units to ensure conformity with institutional policies and procedures.

---