

## **Revised FIU Guidelines and Procedures for Credentialing Faculty**

It is the policy of Florida International University to ensure that all teaching faculty (i.e., instructors of record) possess the academic preparation, training, and experience to teach in an academic setting and meet or exceed the minimum requirements of accrediting bodies and state agencies. This policy applies to all full-time and part-time teaching faculty and teaching assistants whether they are teaching on one of our campuses, on the web, or off campus.

### **I. The Role the Provost's Office**

The Provost's Office will maintain a web-accessible faculty roster to review and ensure that only qualified faculty are assigned to courses. It will be responsible for decisions on any modifications in the Table of Related Disciplines, the assignment of CIP codes to instructors and to courses, qualification of faculty members through either the Active Research in the Discipline or the Active Artistic/Special Talent in the Discipline clearances, and regarding proposed justifications for instructional faculty who do not otherwise qualify for their courses. The Provost's Office must approve the hiring of all instructional personnel. The Provost's Office will also provide routine audits of faculty files to ensure compliance with stated guidelines.

The Provost's Office will use the database to provide accurate, timely information to various accrediting agencies, federal, state, local agencies and/or college departments. Once a semester, the Provost's Office will create a complete listing by department, of all faculty members listed as instructor of record (teaching faculty) and will review all qualifications determine whether there is sufficient documentation to justify teaching the classes to which each teaching faculty has been assigned. The Provost's Office will notify the appropriate dean if there are any discrepancies or deficiencies. If there are discrepancies or deficiencies, the dean must submit the required credential documents within fourteen (14) days.

### **II. The Role of Deans**

Prior to any teaching faculty member's appointment with the University, whether as a full-time or part-time faculty member, adjunct, or graduate teaching assistant who will be teaching and grading a course, the dean of the college/school shall examine and approve the prospective instructor's credentialing file to ensure that the credentials meet the requirements listed by the respective accrediting agency. The dean will work with the department chair, and/or associate dean (as appropriate) to acquire the documents required for the credentialing process.

The dean is responsible for the verification and validation of all faculty credential requirements. The verification and validation of these requirements will be compiled and listed on the appropriate Certification of Credentials and Qualifications Appointment Form for teaching faculty, adjuncts, and graduate teaching assistants. These forms identify and list the credentialing requirements for faculty members teaching in each

College/School at FIU. The dean will forward for final the completed Certification of Credentials and Qualifications form for faculty, adjuncts, and graduate assistants as well as other required documents required for hire to the appropriate office as designated by the Provost.

A copy of the [Certification of Credentials and Qualifications](#) forms with the required documents will be stored in the faculty members' files in the dean's office and the departmental office for adjuncts and graduate teaching assistants.

### **III. The Role of Department Chair, and/or Associate Deans**

Prior to any faculty member's appointment with the University, the department chair, and/or associate dean (as appropriate) will examine the prospective faculty member's credentials to verify that their qualifications meet the requirements of the position and of the specific courses the faculty member may be assigned. If a transcript is unclear, the associate dean and/or chair will contact the institution producing the transcript, and request that the institution provide information regarding the transcript or courses in question and place the documentation received in the file. Only course work and degrees granted by an accredited college or university, or an acceptable evaluation of foreign course work and degrees will be accepted for credentialing faculty members. In the event the institution ceases to exist and there are no records or method of verification, the instructor may be required to provide references to support academic course work. Transcripts from universities outside the United States must be independently evaluated for equivalency by an entity certified by the National Association of Credential Evaluation Services ([NACES](#)). Instructions and details are available in the Academic Affairs website under the [Foreign Credential Evaluation Guidelines](#).

The associate dean and/or chair must complete and submit the [Certification of Credentials and Qualifications](#) form on hire. In cases where the teaching faculty does not have the recommended educational credential ([SACS Faculty Credential guidelines](#) are located at <http://www.sacscoc.org/pdf/081705/faculty%20credentials.pdf>), exceptional alternative qualifications will need to be documented on a [Justification of Credentials and Matrix](#) (located at [http://academic.fiu.edu/academicbudget/www/FinalForms/Justification\\_of\\_Credentials.doc](http://academic.fiu.edu/academicbudget/www/FinalForms/Justification_of_Credentials.doc)) and attached to the Certification of Credentials and Qualifications form. Such documentation must provide a narrative explanation of the instructor's qualifications to teach this/these course(s) based on the academic and professional preparation; diplomas, certificates, or relevant licensures; publications and presentations in the field; honors, awards, and professional recognitions; and other demonstrated competencies, skills, and experiences which the instructor brings to the University—these should be clearly tied to the specific courses to be taught and should establish beyond doubt that the instructor is qualified to teach the specific courses they are to be assigned. To ensure that this connection is sufficiently clear, each course justification must be accompanied by a “course matrix” which has three bullets summarizing essential course objectives and three bullets summarizing the instructor's qualifications bearing directly on these objectives (these should be drawn from the narrative justification). Note that if the

instructor has been credentialed in this manner previously, a new justification and course matrix must be provided for any new courses. If approved by the Office of the Provost, justifications for part-time faculty will extend for a four year period after which new documentation must be evaluated. For full-time faculty members the approval period will be for seven years.

#### **IV. The Role of Faculty**

With the exception of graduate teaching assistants who are using their FIU transcript to verify that they have eighteen (18) graduate hours in the requisite discipline, it is the responsibility of the prospective faculty member to provide the University with all of the documentation needed to verify their credentials. This documentation includes, but is not limited to, a current curriculum vita, official transcripts (indicating terminal degree or other appropriate transcripts), copies of appropriate licenses or certifications, and the verification of work related to teaching experience (as needed). The cost to obtain official transcripts and copies of licenses and certifications is borne by the prospective faculty member. Transcripts from universities outside the United States must be independently evaluated for equivalency. The University will provide support for the translation of foreign degrees for equivalency.

It is the responsibility of faculty members teaching in disciplines that require licensure and/or certification to acquire and maintain those credentials, and to provide documentation of licensure and certification for inclusion in the faculty members' credentialing file in the dean's office. The University may periodically request updated documents from faculty members to maintain the credentialing files. New faculty members must provide an official transcript at time of hire. The official transcripts are required to be sent to the faculty member's Associate Dean and/or Chair.

#### **V. Official Transcripts**

For purposes of this policy, an official transcript is defined as a transcript or other academic record that includes notation that it is official and transmitted directly from the issuing institution to the University's department to which the faculty member will be assigned. Only course work and degrees granted by an accredited college or university, or an acceptable evaluation of foreign course work and degrees will be accepted for credentialing faculty members. Each individual official transcript must meet the authentication criteria based on that institution's standards. The transcripts must possess all of the following:

- a.** the issuing institution's official seal;
- b.** signature of the appropriate authorizing agent, preferable the institution's Registrar;
- c.** the institution's official letterhead or stationary;
- d.** the institution's watermark or other identifier; and
- e.** date of issue.

## **VI. Transcripts from Non-Regional Accredited Institutions**

Only course work and degrees granted by a regionally accredited college or university will be accepted for credentialing faculty members. All transcripts submitted from foreign universities or schools by a prospective hire must be evaluated for equivalency to United States accredited course work by an entity certified by NACES. The hiring of individuals whose degree is from a non-regionally accredited institution in the United States (U.S.) will be considered for credentialing only through justification. When recommending the hiring of such individuals, deans must adduce additional qualifications including the degree-issuing institution's reputation, whether the institution is accredited or recognized by other agencies or organizations, and a thorough evaluation of the candidate's course work and experience must be documented on a Justification of Credentials Form and attached to the Certification of Credentials and Qualifications form.

## **VII. Pending Credentialing File**

In rare instances, it may be necessary to have a faculty member begin teaching prior to the receipt of an official transcript. In these cases, a file will be prepared by the associate dean and/or chair containing all of the information (current resume or curriculum vita and a completed credentialing form) except the official transcript(s) and this file must be sent to the Provost's Office for approval pending receipt of the official documentation. An unofficial transcript or curriculum vitae may be used to document that the individual appears to meet the credentialing requirements and must be included in the faculty member's file. Once the official transcript arrives, the chair/assoc dean will confirm accuracy with the unofficial document and submit it to the Provost's Office. The submission of a revised Certification of Credentials and Qualifications form will be necessary if there is any change that affects the evaluation of the qualifications. There is a maximum sixty (60) day period where a credentialing file can be listed as "Pending" from the receipt of application.

If after the sixty (60) day pending period has elapsed and the credentialing file has not been removed from "pending" status, the individual will not be considered for hire, or if already employed, the individual will be removed from his or her assignment. Removal may result in the instructor's placement on Administrative Leave, with or without pay, until the matter has been resolved. When the required documents have been received, the faculty member's respective dean will re-certify and place the faculty member in the former assignment no earlier than the receipt date of the transcript.

## **VIII. Exceptions for Consortia Agreements:**

Because FIU is committed to fostering academic excellence by providing and enhancing educational opportunities for its students through the establishment of strong collaborative relationships within the United States and around the globe, we have established specific consortia relationships and contractual agreements with other institutions that allow students to receive credit when they enroll in courses provided or supported by those institutions. Such consortia relationships are formally established

contractual agreements which formalize the relationship between FIU and the other institutions. In negotiating such agreements exceptions to this policy may be made as appropriate—for example, in the case of foreign institutions instruction in English may not occur (and proficiency in English would not be expected). In all cases, however, such negotiated agreements will require that the academic qualifications of those engaged in instruction are consistent with the expectations of this policy. Annual reports and regular reviews of such Consortia agreements are required, and we maintain conformity with all the provisions of SACS requirements in such cases (our processes and procedures in regard to these agreements are specified in our 2010 SACS Reaccreditation report, section 3.4.7).

## APPENDIX

**Active Research Clearance in the Discipline** will be used to credential individuals whose recent sustained record of research accomplishments directly relates to their instruction of a specific course or set of courses. Because of their successful research (as attested to by their publications, grants, and/or patents) these faculty members unquestionably demonstrate a level of advanced accomplishment or understanding which enables them to teach the specific courses at a level which is actually beyond that simply guaranteed by attaining an advanced degree in the field. It is well understood that faculty members' research agendas and trajectories can easily lead to the highest levels of performance in areas beyond those their advanced training prepared them to teach in, and this sort of clearance allows us to certify accomplished individuals for courses on the basis of clear demonstration of advanced understanding in the areas the courses address. Individuals whose accomplishments warrant such clearances are so cleared for a period of seven years, and at that point their accomplishments will be reassessed. Only continuing demonstration of this level of success will warrant continuing this method of clearing them for instruction of these courses.

**Active Artistic/Special Talent Clearance in the Discipline** will be used to credential individuals whose recent sustained artistic or creative accomplishments directly relates to their instruction of a specific course or set of courses. Because of their successful artistic and creative accomplishments (as attested to by their recognition through national honors, juried shows, grants, or professional renown) these faculty members unquestionably demonstrate a level of advanced accomplishment or understanding which enables them to teach the specific courses at a level which is actually beyond that simply guaranteed by attaining an advanced degree in the field. It is well understood that faculty members' artistic and creative careers can easily lead to the highest levels of performance in areas beyond those their advanced training prepared them to teach in, and this sort of clearance allows us to certify accomplished individuals for courses on the basis of clear demonstration of advanced accomplishment in the areas the courses address. Individuals whose accomplishments warrant such clearances are so cleared for a period of seven years, and at that point their accomplishments will be reassessed. Only continuing demonstration of this level of success will warrant continuing this method of clearing them for instruction of these courses.