



Faculty Qualifications and Credentials Manual

2019-2020

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Introduction

James Madison University (JMU) is responsible for justifying and keeping a record of the qualifications of its faculty. This accountability documents that the faculty are capable of creating relevant learning outcomes and assessment measures and that the curriculum is relevant to the times.

The purpose of the *Faculty Qualifications and Credentials Manual* is to provide information about the credentialing and verification process for faculty members at JMU. Both full-time and adjunct/part-time instructors of record (teaching faculty) must possess the appropriate credentials in the respective teaching discipline. They must also possess credentials in the specific area/topic being taught and meet or exceed the minimum requirements of JMU policy and that of the Southern Association of Colleges and School Commission of Colleges (SACSCOC), JMU's regional accrediting body, regardless of the location of the course offering or mode of delivery.

Accreditation determines eligibility for Title IV funds (student financial aid) and qualifies institutions and enrolled students for access to federal funds to support teaching, research and student financial aid.

SACSCOC Principles of Accreditation/Guidelines Related to Faculty (2018)

Section 6: Faculty ([SACSCOC Principles of Accreditation](#))

Qualified, effective faculty members are essential to carry out the mission of the institution and to ensure the quality and integrity of its academic program. The tradition of shared governance within American higher education recognizes the importance of both faculty and administrative involvement in the approval of educational programs. Because student learning is central to the institution's mission and educational degrees, the faculty has responsibility for directing the learning enterprise including overseeing and coordinating educational programs to ensure that each contains essential curricular components, has appropriate content and pedagogy, and maintains discipline currency.

Achievement of the institution's mission with respect to teaching, research, and service requires a critical mass of full-time qualified faculty to provide direction and oversight of the academic programs. Due to this significant role, it is imperative that an effective system of evaluation be in place for all faculty members that takes into account the institution's obligations to foster intellectual freedom of faculty to teach, serve, research, and publish.

- 6.1. The institution employs an adequate number of full-time faculty members to support the mission and goals of the institution.**
(Full-time faculty) [CR]
- 6.2. For each of its educational programs, the institution
 - 6.2.a. justifies and documents the qualifications of its faculty members. (Faculty qualifications)
 - 6.2.b. employs a sufficient number of full-time faculty members to ensure curriculum and program quality, integrity, and review. (Program faculty)
 - 6.2.c. assigns appropriate responsibility for program coordination. (Program coordination)
- 6.3. The institution publishes and implements policies regarding the appointment, employment, and regular evaluation of faculty members, regardless of contract or tenure status. (Faculty appointment and evaluation)
- 6.4. The institution publishes and implements appropriate policies and procedures for preserving and protecting academic freedom. (Academic freedom)

- 6.5. The institution provides ongoing professional development opportunities for faculty members as teachers, scholars, and practitioners, consistent with the institutional mission. (Faculty development)

JMU Policies Related to Faculty Credentialing

Policy 2101 Faculty Selection and Hiring Procedures

Applies to Instructional and Administrative & Professional (A&P) Faculty and includes full-time and part-time appointments; adjunct and visiting appointments; tenured, tenure-track, renewable term and untenured appointments; academic year, calendar year, fixed term appointments; and interim appointments. ([Policy 2101](#))

Policy 2104 Part-time/Adjunct Faculty ([Policy 2104](#))

Policy 2103 Graduate Assistantships ([Policy 2103](#))

The Graduate Policy School Policies and Procedures ([Policy Guide](#))

Verification of Faculty Credentials

Faculty credentials are verified on the fourth (4th) Monday of each semester. Therefore, academic heads will ensure that by the third week of the semester all course information is complete, including instructor of record and identification of topics for Special Topics courses, and in the PeopleSoft Student Administration System.

Responsibilities for Faculty Credentialing

Faculty credentialing begins with the hiring process.

Search Committee Chair Responsibilities

The Search Committee Chair will

- Understand and follow JMU Policy 2101 throughout the search, selection and hiring process.
- Ensure that accurate documentation accompanies the hiring of every faculty member.

Prospective Faculty Member Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the prospective faculty member to represent their qualifications and credentials accurately and to provide the university with all of the documentation needed to verify their credentials. "Failure by the candidate to provide the appropriate documentation by the established deadline may result in the withdrawal of the offer, even if the candidate has attempted to formally accept the offer." (JMU [Policy 2101](#), 6.1.1.5)

This documentation includes, but is not limited to

- Official transcripts of highest degree attained. If that degree is not directly related to the teaching assignment, an official transcript of the relevant degree must also be submitted. Only transcripts from an accredited college or university will be accepted for credentialing faculty members. Transcripts from outside the United States must be independently evaluated for equivalency using one of the university-approved providers.
- If a hard copy transcript is submitted for a faculty member, then a hard copy transcript must be retained by Human Resources. Scanned transcripts cannot be accepted.
- If a password protected, electronic transcript is submitted by the employee, not only must the transcript be retained and printed off in color, but the transmittal page (and any additional emails) must be retained by Human Resources as well.
- Copies of appropriate licenses or certifications. Faculty members teaching in disciplines that require licensure and/or certifications must acquire documentation, including issuing agency and expiration date, of those credentials to be placed in the personnel files at the department

level and/or in Human Resources. Curriculum vitae. These licensures/certifications must be current at the time of application.

- Verification of work experience related to teaching (as needed). If the applicant/prospective faculty member is qualified to teach based on alternate credentials, that individual must provide, when requested, satisfactory documentation for all criteria used to meet the alternate credentialing requirements. A curriculum vitae or resume is not sufficient documentation. Verification examples are provided in the next section.
- Cost. The cost to obtain official transcripts and copies of licenses and certifications is borne by the prospective faculty member.

Current Faculty Members Responsibilities

The current faculty member will be responsible for providing

- Official transcripts. If a faculty member is hired in anticipation of, but prior to having fulfilled all requirements for a particular degree (such as a Ph.D.) the individual will “provide the official transcript of the pending degree within 15 working days after it is awarded.” (JMU [Policy 2101](#), 6.1.1.8)
- Copies of appropriate licenses or certifications. It is the responsibility of faculty members teaching in disciplines that require licensure and/or certifications to provide documentation of such licensure and/or certification, including issuing agency and expiration date, in a timely manner to be placed in the personnel files at the department level and/or in Human Resources. Updates will be completed by the Faculty Credentialing Coordinator if information is available on an appropriate on-line site (i.e. state licensing board). If the FCC is unable to update, it is the responsibility of the faculty member to update documentation of such licensure and/or certification in a timely manner.
- Verification of work experience related to teaching (as needed). If the teaching assignment changes, the faculty member must provide satisfactory documentation for all criteria used to meet the alternate credentialing. A curriculum vitae or resume is not sufficient documentation. Verification examples are provided in the next section.
- Cost. The cost to obtain official transcripts and copies of licenses and certifications is borne by the prospective faculty member.

Academic Unit Head (AUH)/Department Head Responsibilities

The academic unit head will

- Ensure course information is completed in the PeopleSoft Student Administration System no later than the end of the third week of the semester. All course sections, including Special Topics courses, must have an instructor of record identified. Special Topics courses must also have a title that identifies the content/focus of the course of study.
- Validate the credentials of the faculty member and verify that the credentials are consistent with JMU policy and the university’s regional accreditation guidelines prior to the faculty member teaching the course. Faculty teaching in cross-listed courses must demonstrate qualifications/credentials in all areas as cross-listed courses are seen by SACSCOC as separate courses. Documentation may need to be provided that the academic fields are similar enough to cross-teach (such as astronomy and physics).
- Submit written justification if the degrees represented by the official transcripts are not directly related to the teaching assignment. Validation of expertise must not just in the teaching discipline but in the specific area/topic being taught. The written justification, for use of alternate credentials, must explicitly address how the individual’s accomplishments constitute a level of preparation for the instructional assignment/particular course comparable to that of a person holding a graduate degree in the teaching field. It is understood there are certain subject areas/emerging disciplines where limited graduate programs, degrees and courses are available. In those instances, the following strategies could also be used to complete the Hiring Justification Form is available on the Human Resources website ([Recruitment Services Forms](#)).

Appropriate experiences and qualifications include:

- a minimum of 18 graduate semester hours in the teaching discipline (official transcript) (with an identified list of courses that are appropriate to specific courses/area)
- master's theses/doctoral dissertations (documented on transcript or other official means)
- demonstrated competence, effectiveness and capacity in the teaching discipline including as appropriate (documentation of a combination of):
 - professional licensure and certifications (including issuing agency and expiration date)(licensure/certification dates must be documented)
 - professional and/or artistic accomplishments (copies of programs and/or critical review)
 - additional coursework (official transcript with courses identified beyond qualifying degree; CEUs from relevant workshops attended)
 - undergraduate and graduate degrees (official transcripts)
 - in-field work experiences (reference letters on agency/institution letterhead-see explanation below; letters of agreement or acknowledgement; copies of contracts)
 - research/publications (full citation and, if requested, publication tables of contents or first/title page)
 - relevant grants (official notification of award)
 - exceptional achievements
 - honors and awards (copies of award with date and awarding agency/institution)
 - continuous documented excellence in teaching (copies of evaluations or peer review or supervisor's summative reporting of evaluative/review process)
 - similar activities to those listed above that may be combined to verify the instructor's expertise.
- In some instances, it may be necessary to link appropriate experiences directly to the course objectives/student learning outcomes in a course matrix. If used, the course matrix would identify key course objectives and explain the evidence for concluding that the individual is prepared to meet those objectives. The documentation should show how the prospective/current faculty member's experience and accomplishments have prepared him or her to effectively deliver the instructional assignment, focusing on accomplishments across a career but with particular weight given to recent and current work.
- Collect original documentation to validate any alternate credentials. A curriculum vita (CV) or resume is not sufficient documentation of qualifications. If in-field experience is noted on the CV/resume, documentation must include letters (emails accepted) from former employers. The letter must document the reference's position and organization. The reference must provide information on the applicant including but not limited to:
 - Position title and responsibilities (especially those related specifically to the job for which individual is being hired)
 - Job performance, including performance strengths and weaknesses
 - Collegiality and interpersonal skills
 - Relationships with and evaluations by students
 - Other information deemed important by the hiring unit.

The same level of detail is required for publications, certificates, licensures, etc. on the CV if they are being used to verify a faculty member's qualifications to teach a specific course. The Faculty Credentialing Coordinator will review the submitted documentation for compliance.

- Maintain all alternative documentation in the academic unit, available for review upon request of the dean, Provost, Faculty Credentialing Coordinator, or site visitor during an accreditation visit.

Graduate Director Supervising Teaching Assistants (TAs) Responsibilities

The graduate director will

- Ensure that the TA holds a master's in the teaching discipline or 18 graduate credit hours in the teaching discipline
- Ensure direct supervision of the TA by a faculty member experienced in the teaching discipline
- Conduct regular in-service training for teaching assistants, as well as planned and periodic evaluations.

Dean Responsibilities

The dean will

- Ensure implementation and compliance with the qualifications and credentialing procedures.
- Verify the AUH's assessment of the faculty member's qualifications and/or justification are consistent with JMU policy and the university's regional accreditation guidelines.

Faculty Credentialing Coordinator Responsibilities

The Faculty Credentialing Coordinator, as a representative of the Provost's Office, will

- Remain knowledgeable of SACSCOC credentialing requirements, specifically as related to faculty
- Maintain a faculty roster ensuring that faculty members meet the criteria specified in JMU policy and the university's regional guidelines ([SACSCOC Sample Faculty Roster](#))
 - Review and certify the qualifications/credentials of each faculty member for each course taught by the faculty member
 - Collaborate with AUHs to determine and verify alternative credentials (licensure/certifications; matching course objectives to link instructor to course; previous work assignments and support documentation, etc.) for all faculty in their assigned courses
- Ensure accurate representation of faculty and their credentials (publication of websites, etc.)
- Answer questions related to faculty qualifications and credentialing.
- Review changes to associated policies, procedures, guidelines, handbooks and forms to ensure consistency with faculty credentialing policy
- Annually review and, as appropriate update, *Faculty Qualifications and Credentials Manual*
- Participate as a member of the SACSCOC Work Group

SACSCOC Advisory Council Responsibilities

Membership includes representatives from the Office of the President, college dean, and academic unit heads; representatives from various administrative divisions on campus, and members of the SACSCOC Working Group. This group will

- Stay current with SACSCOC issues and requirements
- Recommend appropriate policies
- Communicate clearly regarding SACSCOC-related issues/requirements
- Receive feedback on SACSCOC-related issues from faculty, administrators and staff.