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The purpose of the *Faculty Qualifications and Credentials Manual* is to provide information about the credentialing and verification process for faculty members at James Madison University (JMU). Both full-time and adjunct/part-time instructors of record (teaching faculty) must possess the appropriate credentials in the respective teaching discipline and meet or exceed the minimum requirements of JMU policy and 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**

*Comprehensive Standard 3.7.1* ([SACSCOC Principles of Accreditation](#))

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.

When an institution defines faculty qualifications using faculty credentials, institutions should use the following as credential guidelines:

a. Faculty teaching general education courses at the undergraduate level: doctorate or master’s degree in the teaching discipline or master’s degree with a concentration in the teaching discipline (a minimum of 18 graduate semester hours in the teaching discipline).

b. Faculty teaching associate degree courses designed for transfer to a baccalaureate degree: doctorate or master’s degree in the teaching discipline or master’s degree with a concentration in the teaching discipline (a minimum of 18 graduate semester hours in the teaching discipline).

c. Faculty teaching associate degree courses not designed for transfer to the baccalaureate degree: bachelor’s degree in the teaching discipline, or associate’s degree and demonstrated competencies in the teaching discipline.

d. 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).

e. Faculty teaching graduate and post-baccalaureate course work: earned doctorate/terminal degree in the teaching discipline or a related discipline.

f. 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.
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 2114 Part-time/Adjunct Instructional Faculty (Policy 2114)
Policy 2103 Graduate Assistantships (Policy 2103)
The Graduate School Policies and Procedures (Policy Guide)

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

Responsibilities for Faculty Credentialing

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.

Faculty Member Responsibilities

Applicant for a Faculty Position/Prospective Faculty Member

It is the responsibility of the prospective faculty member 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.

- Copies of appropriate licenses or certifications. Faculty members teaching in disciplines that require licensure and/or certifications must acquire and maintain documentation of those credentials to be placed in the personnel files at the department level and/or in Human Resources. It is the responsibility of the faculty member to not only acquire and maintain proper licensure or certification but also to provide/update documentation of such licensure and/or certification in a timely manner.

- Curriculum vitae, which is current at the time of application. This will be submitted to Human Resources.

- 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.

- The cost to obtain official transcripts and copies of licenses and certifications is borne by the prospective faculty member.

**Current Faculty Members Responsibilities**

- **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 update documentation of such licensure and/or certification in a timely manner to be placed in the personnel files at the academic unit level and/or in Human Resources.

- **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.

- 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 associated with them 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. Faculty teaching in cross-listed courses must demonstrate qualifications/credentials in all areas as cross-listed courses are seen by SACSCOC as separate courses.

- **Submit written justification** if the degrees represented by the official transcripts are not directly related to the teaching assignment. 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. 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
    - demonstrated competence, effectiveness and capacity in the teaching discipline including as appropriate (a combination of):
      - professional licensure and certifications
      - professional and/or artistic accomplishments
      - additional coursework
      - undergraduate and graduate degrees
      - in-field work experiences
      - research/publications
• exceptional achievements
• honors and awards
• continuous documented excellence in teaching
• 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; documentation of 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 during an accreditation site visit.

Graduate Director Supervising Teaching Assistants (TAs) Responsibilities
• 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, and planned and periodic evaluations.

Dean Responsibilities
• 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
• 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 credentials of each faculty member
  ○ Request additional information from the AUH if the documentation provided is not sufficient or available in the personnel file (Human Resources)
Review submitted documentation to determine compliance

- **Maintain** the Credentialing Requirements by Discipline/Program Table. ([Requirements Example](#))
- **Collaborate** with academic unit heads to ensure justifications and documents are appropriate for all faculty in their assigned courses and to ensure accurate representation of faculty and their credentials (publication of websites, etc.)
- **Answer questions** related to faculty qualifications and credentialing.

**SACSCOC Advisory Council Responsibilities**

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

**Faculty Qualifications and Credentials Subcommittee of the SACSCOC Advisory Council (FQCS) Responsibilities**

- **Consider** standard operating procedures related to faculty credentialing

- **Complete periodic review** of the Faculty Qualifications and Credentials Manual. Recommendations for changes to the manual are submitted to the JMU SACSCOC Advisory Council for review. The recommendations are then submitted to the Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and to the University’s Legal Counsel for review and revisions.