



Standards for Faculty Credentials

Policy No. 02.06

Effective Date: September 1, 2020

Tennessee State University is committed to hiring qualified faculty members to carry out the mission of the institution, core values of the University, and meet the standards required by SACSCOC and programmatic accrediting bodies. Academic credentials (i.e. earned degrees) are the and most important qualification for faculty; however other types of qualifications, although rare, may prove to be appropriate. All instructors (tenured, tenure-track, full-time temporary, and adjuncts must have the appropriate credentialing to teach a course. The appropriate credentialing and process of justification and documentation are outlined in this policy.

SACSCOC Standard 6.2.a (2018 version): For each of its educational programs, the institution justifies and documents the qualifications of its faculty members.

SACS Faculty Credential Guidelines. Faculty credential guidelines to demonstrate faculty qualifications are provided by SACS Commission on Colleges. These are:

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

- Faculty teaching general education courses at the undergraduate level: doctoral 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).
- Faculty teaching associate degree courses designed for transfer to a baccalaureate degree: doctoral 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).
- 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.
- Faculty teaching baccalaureate courses: doctoral 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). Faculty teaching graduate and post-baccalaureate course work: earned doctoral/terminal degree in the teaching discipline or a related discipline.
- 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 evaluation

Chart 1 provides a quick reference guide for faculty credentialing.

Chart 1: Faculty Credentialing Guidelines

Faculty Qualifications Rating	Credentialing Guidelines
Highly Qualified	Terminal degree in the teaching discipline
Qualified	Terminal degree in a related discipline with at least 18 graduate semester credit-hours in the teaching discipline.
Qualified	Master's degree in the teaching discipline.
Marginally Qualified	Master's degree with at least 18 graduate semester credit-hours in the teaching discipline PLUS
	Alternative Justification: Related work or professional experience, licensure and certifications; scholarly publications and presented papers; and other demonstrated competencies and achievements that contribute to effective teaching and student learning outcomes.
	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.
Not Qualified	Does not meet any of the above criteria.

Qualifications: Faculty members must meet requirements in the Faculty Credentialing Policy. Departments are also responsible for ensuring all faculty meet the credentialing requirements of program accrediting agencies. All faculty – tenured, tenure-track, full-time temporary, adjunct – must meet the faculty qualification standards. This includes instructors who teach in-person and online.

Terminal Degrees: For purposes of credentialing, besides the PhD (Doctor of Philosophy), the following doctoral-level degrees are considered the terminal degree:

- DBA – Doctor of Business Administration
- DM – Doctor of Music
- DMA – Doctor of Musical Arts
- DNP – Doctor of Nursing Practice
- DOA – Doctorate of Arts
- DPH, DrPH – Doctor of Public Health
- DSc – Doctor of Science

- DSW – Doctorate of Social Work
- EdD – Doctor of Education
- JD – Juris Doctor
- PsyD – Doctor of Psychology
- DHS – Doctor of Health Sciences
- OTD – Doctor of Occupational Therapy

The following master's degrees are considered the terminal degree in their respective disciplines (given in parentheses):

- MFA - Master of Fine Arts (art, music, theatre, creative writing)
- MLA - Master of Landscape Architecture (landscape architecture, plant sciences)
- MLIS, MLS, MSLS, MSIS - Master of Library and Information Science, Master of Library Science, Master of Science in Library Science, Master of Science in Information Science (information science)
- MS - Master of Science in Graphic Design (art)
- MSW, MSSW - Master of Social Work, Master of Science in Social Work (social work)
- Master's in Health Informatics and Health Information. (Health Information Management)
- Master of Science in Respiratory Therapy (Cardiorespiratory Care)
- Master of Science in Dental Hygiene (Dental Hygiene)

Faculty Assignments: All faculty assigned in Banner as a course instructor (>0%) must meet the faculty credentialing standards.

Alternative Qualifications (per SACSCOC guidelines): Under extreme circumstances, faculty members may be hired with an alternative qualification request. These requests are submitted on a course-by-course basis. These requests may be submitted for approval if one of the following two standards are met.

- The faculty member has a record of demonstrated, long-term professional experience (including scholarly publications and presentations) and/or professional licensure (where applicable).
- The faculty member has formal academic training in a closely related discipline, and the faculty member is requesting approval to teach a course with competencies directly related to the faculty member's trained discipline.

After review of the qualifying documentation (e.g. transcript, curriculum vitae, licensure, professional letters, job experience documents) the Academic Dean must forward a justification letter to OIERPA and Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. Formal approval of an alternative qualification request can only be given by the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Certification of Qualifications: Qualifications for all faculty must be reviewed and approved by each of the following: program coordinator/director (if applicable), department chair, academic dean, and the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. Review and approval is conducted through the hiring process via PeopleAdmin and the hiring proposal process. A candidate's Curriculum Vitae, transcripts, and any associated licensing documents are part of the review package.

Faculty Credential Records Requirements: Tennessee State maintains a record of faculty credentials for every faculty member in the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, Research, Planning and Assessment.

include: an official transcript for the highest degree earned, as well as those for any other relevant degrees, such as master's and bachelor's degrees and a curriculum vitae

The current curriculum vitae must include the following sections, if applicable:

1. Education: include all Bachelor's, Master's, Ph.D., and/or terminal degrees
2. Academic appointments with dates: including current position
3. Other credentials: any professional licensures, certificates, honors and/or awards that relate to courses to be taught
4. Related professional experience: list additional work-related experiences that relate to courses to be taught
5. Grants, publications, presentations: as they relate to courses to be taught
6. Membership in professional organizations

For purposes of accreditation, transcripts/certificates/licensures are considered official only if they are sent directly from or on behalf of the granting institution to OIERPA and the Office of Human Resources.

Annual Review of Credentials: Annually, OIERPA and the Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, will require all faculty to submit an updated CV. Any faculty with an approved alternative credentialing request, must submit supporting documentation each academic year. Department Chairs will submit the annual faculty rosters, CVs, and alternative credentials no later than 15 days prior to the start of the fall semester. New faculty members starting in spring or summer must have documentation submitted no later than 15 days prior to spring or summer semester.

Faculty Rosters: The Faculty Roster is a SACSCOC required report listing (1) all credit courses taught during the academic year, (2) instructor of record for each course, and (3) the instructor's credentials, including information justifying the instructor's credentials for the specific courses. The faculty rosters will be maintained internally to ensure compliance. College Deans are required to submit the Faculty Roster Form at the beginning of each semester to the Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs and OIERPA. Information requested on the form should be provided for all full-time and part-time faculty teaching credit courses. This includes high school faculty teaching dual enrollment courses for the institution.

Department Chair Qualifications

- A Department Chair must be eligible to hold full-time faculty status in the Department and at least the rank of assistant professor at the time of appointment.
- At the time of appointment, a Department Chair must be tenured or tenure-track faculty in a discipline in the Department.
- An earned doctorate in a discipline in the Department is required.
- A minimum of five (5) years of leadership experience is required of a candidate for Department Chair.
- Evidence of leadership qualities.
- Subject matter expertise in the discipline (including licensure where relevant) are required.
- Skills and knowledge consistent with the mission of the department and the institution.
- Teaching experience in higher education in the discipline.

- Familiarity of and experience with accreditation standards (where applicable)
- Solid people development skills with a focus on providing opportunities for faculty and staff to excel.

Exceptions to any of the qualifications for Department Chair may be granted only by the written approval of the Provost and the President.

Academic Dean Qualifications:

- A Dean must be eligible to hold full-time faculty status and at least the rank of associate professor in a discipline in the College at the time of appointment.
- A Dean is required to have an earned doctorate in the discipline.
- Ten years of full-time teaching experience at a university with some graduate teaching experience in a discipline in the College.
- Record of teaching, professional development/scholarly work, and service to warrant faculty rank of Associate Professor in a discipline in the College.
- Understanding of appropriate accreditation for the College programs and university, preferably having national review experience
- 7 years of administrative experience in higher education; At least 3 – 5 years’ experience as a Dean is a plus.
- Experienced in budget management
- Skills and knowledge consistent with the mission of the college and the institution.
- A reputation for creative scholarship and a demonstrable record of fostering excellence in research, teaching, and service in a discipline in the College.
- Ability to think strategically and build effective institutional partnerships.
- Demonstrated administrative experience, a high standard of professional integrity, and strong team-building skills.
- Ability to effectively execute the College's vision and mission to internal and external stakeholders

Exceptions to any of the qualifications for Dean may be granted only by the written approval of the Provost and the President.

Adopted: August 2020