

TEACHING FACULTY CREDENTIALING GUIDELINES

Office of the Senior Vice President and Provost
Virginia Tech

For regional accreditation purposes, all **instructors of record** at Virginia Tech must meet the credentialing requirements outlined in the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS), Faculty Credentials Guidelines attached (Standard 3.7.1 of the *Principles of Accreditation*, see Appendix A). Documenting the credentials of teaching faculty is the responsibility of the department where the course originates or is listed. This may be different than the employing department in some cases.

REQUIRED TEACHING CREDENTIALS BY COURSE LEVEL

The required credentials for instructors of record by course level are outlined below:

Course Level	SACS Standard	SACS Credential Requirement
Baccalaureate/Undergraduate	3.7.1a 3.7.1d	Doctorate, terminal* 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)
Graduate/Post-baccalaureate	3.7.1e	Earned doctorate/terminal* degree in the teaching discipline or a related discipline

* Terminal Degrees: In addition to the doctorate (PhD, EdD, and other doctoral degrees), Virginia Tech recognizes the following degrees as terminal degrees in specific fields:

BVSC	Bachelor of Veterinary Science (foreign degree equivalent to the DVM) <u>with</u> appropriate board certification
DVM	Doctor of Veterinary Medicine with appropriate board certification
JD	Juris Doctorate, appropriate only for fields where law is the principal academic expertise
MArch	Master of Architecture (but not the MA in Architecture)
MD	Doctor of Medicine (with board certification)
MFA	Master of Fine Arts, applicable to several fields such as Creative Writing, Theater, or Art
MLA	Master of Landscape Architecture (but not the MA/MS)
MM	Master of Music

GRADUATE TEACHING ASSISTANTS

Graduate assistants assigned as instructor of record must also have documented teaching credentials according to SACS guidelines:

Graduate Teaching Assistants	SACS Standard	SACS Credential Requirement
Graduate Teaching Assistants	3.7.1f	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

Virginia Tech also recognizes the importance and direct contribution to teaching competency of specific courses offered by the Graduate School for graduate students preparing for a future faculty career. Completion of the following courses may be counted within the 18 graduate credit hours required for minimum qualification:

- GRAD 5114, Contemporary Pedagogy
- GRAD 5004, GTA Training Workshop
- GRAD 5124, Library Research Skills

The graduate school must approve additional proposed pedagogy-related coursework to be included in the minimum 18-credit hours required prior to assignment as instructor of record.

PHYSICAL AND ELECTRONIC STORAGE OF CREDENTIALS

Official transcripts of the highest degree are required of all instructors of record. In exceptional cases (must be approved by the hiring department head and college dean), the following documentation is acceptable where the original transcript is not available: certification by the registrar or other appropriate official of the degree-granting institution of the highest degree awarded, or visual verification of original diploma with the raised seal attested to by the department head or designee and copy of the diploma and statement provided to Human Resources.

The physical storage of the official transcript is the personnel file in Human Resources; a copy of the transcript is kept in the personnel file of the department. Degree information, including other qualifications when appropriate, is electronically stored in Banner, entered by Human Resources. Departments must also obtain and store official transcripts for all adjunct faculty and graduate teaching assistants, with a transcript cover sheet included in the file. Although the official transcript is not forwarded to Human Resources, degree information for adjunct teaching faculty is sent to Human Resources where it will be entered and electronically stored in Banner.

TRANSCRIPT COVER SHEET (available at www.provost.vt.edu/forms.php)

The transcript cover sheet is completed by the department head, attached to the official transcript of the highest degree, and forwarded to Human Resources. The transcript cover sheet certifies the following:

- degree discipline appropriate for teaching discipline
- degree level appropriate for teaching level
- international degree equivalency
- other qualifications are documented

INSTRUCTORS OF RECORD NOT MEETING THE DEGREE REQUIREMENT

In instances where the instructor of record does not meet the degree requirement, the course origination department must provide additional certification of other qualifications on the transcript cover sheet. This information includes a justification (by course level and course content) that may include consideration of 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.

HIRING DEPARTMENT CHECKLIST

- ✓ **Teaching Credentials Explicitly Stated:** Credentials appropriate to the teaching assignment are explicitly stated in any recruitment and selection process, whether a full search is conducted or not.
- ✓ **Transcripts of Highest Degree Documented:** Original transcripts of the highest degree earned are required of all new faculty members upon employment. This condition is stated in the terms of offer and must be included in any communication with adjunct or wage faculty members. Continuation of employment is contingent upon receipt and verification of such credentials by the department head or designee. For all salaried faculty members, the department is responsible for making sure that the original transcript is received, a transcript cover sheet is attached and the documents are forwarded to Human Resources; copies are kept in the departmental personnel file. An original transcript must have an official raised seal from the institutional source. Copies are not acceptable. For adjunct/wage faculty appointments, the original transcript is retained in the departmental personnel file with the transcript cover sheet. Original transcripts of highest degree earned are also required of faculty members whose assignments do not include teaching, such as post-docs or other special research faculty, or administrative/professional faculty. In these cases, the responsibility of the department is to verify that the transcript confirms receipt of the stated degree(s) on the application materials, usually a vita. The original transcripts must be submitted to Human Resources. The department retains copies.
- ✓ **Other Qualifications Documented:** Academic programs in a number of fields, particularly professional programs and the creative, visual, and performing arts, often benefit from faculty whose accomplishments and significant professional experiences are outside the academy. Qualifications of faculty members with a credential less than the terminal degree but with exceptional experience or accomplishments must be documented by the department head on the transcript cover sheet that accompanies the transcript of the highest degree earned.
- ✓ **International Institution Certification:** Virginia Tech routinely hires faculty with credentials from foreign institutions and these internationally trained faculty add to the diversity and richness of the teaching and

learning environment. It is the responsibility of the department head to verify the quality and equivalency of any highest degree awarded from an international institution. The signature of the department head on the transcript cover sheet attests to the certification of equivalent international credentials.

COURSE ORIGATION DEPARTMENT CHECKLIST

- ✓ **Transcripts of Highest Degree Documented:** If the instructor of record for a course in a department is not a faculty member of that department with credentials verified upon hire, the teaching credentials appropriate for the course content and level must be verified. All faculty members and graduate teaching assistants assigned as instructor of record in the course origination department must have teaching credentials verified by the course origination department head. In this case, copies of the transcript are acceptable if the faculty member or graduate assistant has an official transcript documented elsewhere at Virginia Tech. The course origination department head will submit a transcript cover sheet with alternative credential documentation when appropriate. Instructional faculty members who earned their highest degree at Virginia Tech must also obtain an official transcript from the registrar for their individual personnel file.
- ✓ **Other Qualifications Documented:** For instructors with a credential less than what is required by the SACS guidelines, the department head will document other qualifications with a transcript cover sheet sent to Human Resources.
- ✓ **International Credentials Certified:** For faculty whose highest degree is from an international institution, the department must:

Complete both (1) and (2):

- (1) Confirm the institution is listed in the *World List of Universities*. Copies of this book are located in the university registrar's office and in undergraduate admissions, and
- (2) If the transcript is in any language other than English, the faculty candidate must submit a translated transcript as a condition of employment. The translation must come from the institution, a transcript translation service provider, or an approved Virginia Tech translator.

and one from (3) – (5):

- (3) Have the translated transcript certified as equivalent by a Virginia Tech employee who is familiar with the institution and discipline,
 - (4) Have the translated transcript certified as equivalent by a professional colleague who is familiar with the institution and discipline, or
 - (5) Pay for an international degree verification service from an approved service provider such as World Education Services
- ✓ **Teaching Load/Census Date Audit:** Department heads will review the teaching load file and the online faculty roster at census date to ensure all qualifications of instructors of record are appropriately documented.

CROSS-LISTED COURSES

It is the responsibility of the department where the course prefix originates to verify the credentials of the primary instructor are appropriate for teaching in the course prefix field. Cross-listed courses have a lead department; this department must maintain credential information according to the course origination department checklist.

HUMAN RESOURCES CHECKLIST

- ✓ **Credential Information Entered in Database:** For new salaried faculty members, Human Resources enters degree information into the Banner record based on information provided on the faculty vita if the transcript is not yet available. When the original transcript and transcript cover sheet are forwarded to Human Resources by the department, degree information is verified and reconciled with previous Banner entry. Any serious discrepancies are referred to the dean's office for investigation and resolution. Other qualifications are entered in Banner from the transcript cover sheet.

For adjunct faculty who are assigned as instructors of record (including federal employees, ROTC, and wage), the transcript cover sheet is attached to a **copy** of the transcript for the highest degree and routed to Human

Resources. The credential information will be entered into Banner; however, Human Resources is not responsible for maintaining personnel files on these instructors. After entering the degree information into the system, Human Resources will return the transcript cover sheet and transcript copy to the department where the personnel files of these instructors are stored.

- ✓ **Faculty Members Earning Virginia Tech Degrees:** To update current employee records with recently awarded Virginia Tech degrees, Human Resources will match active employee records with degrees awarded by Virginia Tech at the end of each semester and create appropriate records in Banner for that employee. Instructional faculty members who earned their highest degree at Virginia Tech must also obtain an official transcript from the registrar for their individual personnel file. Human Resources will indicate on the Banner record if the transcript has been received and such missing documentation will be flagged by regular management reports. The date, major, and degree designation for a Virginia Tech-awarded degree shall be the official student record provided by the registrar.
- ✓ **Monthly Audit of Credential Records:** Human Resources will produce management reports at least monthly to review all faculty records with missing degree information and follow up with department contacts to obtain original documentation and missing degree information. Records that remain outstanding will be addressed by the relevant dean's office and/or provost's office.

INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH AND EFFECTIVENESS CHECKLIST

- ✓ **Annual Review and Audit:** At least once per year, the Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness will merge the teaching load database with the Human Resources database to identify any faculty members who do not appear to have the credentials appropriate to their teaching role. This report will be sent to the provost's office, or the graduate school in the case of GTAs, to determine compliance.

OTHER QUALIFICATIONS FOR SPECIFIC FIELDS

Virginia Tech has developed the following faculty credential guide for departments where the terminal degree may not be the only consideration for teaching competency. The transcript cover sheet from the department head must provide a thorough justification of other qualifications; this is submitted with the transcript of highest degree.

College of Architecture and Urban Studies

- **School of Architecture + Design:** For tenure-track positions, the School of Architecture + Design seeks faculty members with a PhD or the MArch, which is the terminal professional degree in architecture, or the MLA, which is the terminal professional degree in landscape architecture. Professional registration is expected for those teaching design studios. Instructors are also expected to have the terminal degree and professional certification. Exceptional professional credentials validated by regional or national awards/recognitions for professional products and significant experience in professional practice may act in lieu of the terminal degree.
- **Myers-Lawson School of Construction:** A doctorate is normally required for tenure-track positions in the School. Exceptional professional credentials validated by regional or national awards/recognitions for professional products and significant experience in professional practice may act in lieu of the terminal degree.
- **School of Visual Arts:** The doctorate is required for tenure-track positions in Art History. Tenure-track and instructor-level positions in art, design, and new media require a terminal degree, usually the MFA. In cases of extraordinary achievement in the areas of juried exhibitions, awards, and honors, the ensuing national and international recognition may also act in lieu of the terminal or master's degree.

College of Business

Instructors of record without the terminal degree in the appropriate teaching field may be approved by the college as academically or professionally qualified. Academically qualified instructors possess extraordinary contributions to scholarship, including but not limited to authoring book chapters and publications in peer-reviewed journals. Professionally qualified instructors must possess exceptional business leadership qualifications such as an executive level business position or business ownership. Instructors with the MBA as the highest degree must have the 18 graduate hours in the teaching discipline verified by the department head on the transcript cover sheet.

College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences

- **Communication:** Instructors (full-time and part-time, continuing and temporary) must possess an earned master's degree in communication, or a closely related field. An earned bachelor's degree with exceptional qualifications (as attested to by years of professional experience directly applicable to the teaching assignment or as attested to by regionally and nationally recognized accomplishments in areas such as publications, awards, honors, and creative/professional activity) may act in lieu of the master's degree.
- **Creative Writing:** In the areas of creative writing, the Master of Fine Arts is considered the terminal degree. A master's degree (non-MFA), with the following qualifications, may act in lieu of the terminal degree: exceptional qualifications as attested to by nationally recognized publications in fiction, poetry, playwriting, creative nonfiction, or new media writing. In cases of extraordinary achievement in the areas of publications, awards, and honors, the ensuing national and international recognition may also act in lieu of the terminal or master's degree. Instructors (full-time and part-time, continuing and temporary) must possess an earned master's degree in English, or a closely related field. An earned bachelor's degree with exceptional qualifications (as attested to by years of professional experience directly applicable to the teaching assignment or as attested to by regionally and nationally recognized accomplishments in areas such as publications, awards, honors, and creative/professional activity) may act in lieu of the master's degree.
- **Theatre:** In the areas of theatre history and criticism, the doctorate (e.g., PhD, EdD, DA) is considered the terminal degree. In the areas of performance, design, directing, technical theatre, or management, the MFA is considered a terminal degree. The master's degree (non-MFA) with the following qualifications, may act in lieu of the terminal degree: an additional 21 graduate credits and/or exceptional qualifications as attested to by professional experience directly applicable to the teaching assignment or by regionally and nationally recognized accomplishments in areas such as publications, awards, performances, honors, and scholarly/professional activity. An earned bachelor's degree with exceptional qualifications (as attested to by years of professional experience directly applicable to the teaching assignment and regionally and nationally recognized accomplishments in areas such as publications, awards, performances, honors, and scholarly/professional activity) may act in lieu of the master's/terminal degree. If no terminal degree is held, faculty teaching performance-related courses must have expertise as a performer in the profession at the regional, national, or international level. Those teaching directing courses must have professional directing experience.
- **Foreign Languages and Literatures:** The PhD in an appropriate field is required for tenure-track positions. Instructors must have a master's degree in the discipline or at least 18 graduate credit hours in the teaching discipline to teach undergraduate courses in the department. In exceptional cases, a bachelor's degree, native speaking ability, and significant successful teaching experience may substitute for the master's degree.
- **Music:** The terminal degree in music history and music theory is the PhD. The terminal degree in music education is the PhD or EdD. The terminal degree in performance, conducting, or composition of music is the Doctor of Musical Arts (DMA). The master's degree (e.g., MM, MA, Artist Diploma), an additional 24 graduate credits, and exceptional qualifications as attested to by regionally and nationally recognized accomplishments (publications, awards, performances, honors, scholarly/professional activity) may act in lieu of the terminal degree. Part-time faculty teaching studio and laboratory courses must have a bachelor's degree plus 18 hours at the graduate level and/or documentation of five years of professional experience. For performance-related courses, faculty must have expertise as performers at the regional level. Piano accompaniment faculty not assigned to course teaching must have at least five years of accompaniment experience in more than one medium. Part-time faculty assigned to the academic classroom must have a master's level degree with 18 hours in course work related to the assignment. Exceptions may be made only if professional experiences in the assigned area are directly applicable to the teaching assignment.
- **ROTC:** The faculty of the ROTC departments at Virginia Tech (Army, Navy, and Air Force) are qualified, active duty military officers. They teach ROTC courses which are aligned with their military service and for which they have received instructor training by their military service.

College of Veterinary Medicine

Assistant professors must possess either: (1) a DVM (Doctorate of Veterinary Medicine) or equivalent degree, completion of a residency training program in the specialty field, and board certification (or board-eligible status) in the most appropriate specialty board or college recognized by the American Veterinary Medical Association (foreign specialty board eligibility or certification may be considered). If not board certified at the beginning of employment, board certification is expected during the probationary period, or (2) a PhD with or without a DVM or equivalent degree.

Associate professors or professors must possess either: (1) a DVM or equivalent degree and board certification in the most appropriate specialty board or college recognized by the American Veterinary Medical Association (foreign specialty board certification may be considered), or (2) a PhD with or without a DVM or equivalent degree.

Clinical instructors and clinical assistant professors must possess the appropriate professional degree with preference given to individuals eligible for or certified in the most appropriate specialty board or college recognized by the American Veterinary Medical Association (foreign specialty board qualification or certification may be considered).

Clinical associate professors or clinical professors must possess the appropriate professional degree and certification in the most appropriate specialty board or college recognized by the American Veterinary Medical Association (foreign specialty board certification may be considered).



*Commission on Colleges
Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
1866 Southern Lane
Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097*

**FACULTY CREDENTIALS
Guidelines**

Comprehensive Standard 3.7.1 of the *Principles of Accreditation* reads as follows:

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.

Approved: College Delegate Assembly, December 2006