

## FACULTY CREDENTIALS & QUALIFICATIONS

The UNCSA Faculty Credentials and Qualifications Manual is designed to guide the credentials evaluator through the process of assessing the academic credentials and qualifications of the University's full-time faculty and visiting faculty who teach college-level courses. All UNCSA faculty are required to meet the guidelines established by the Commission on College of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS). UNCSA is responsible for determining acceptable qualifications and documenting and justifying the qualifications of its faculty to teach assigned courses.

UNCSA conducts a two-part credential review process. The initial evaluation is done at the campus level by the dean, the specific content expert. Upon dean recommendation, final approval rests with the Provost/Vice Provost.

Faculty qualifications and credentials are verified using the *Certification of Credentials & Qualification to Teach for Faculty Appointment* form. It is important to note that this form must be submitted, including the required attachments (official transcript(s), professional portfolio and foreign credential verification, as applicable) and approved prior to extending a formal offer of employment.

### **SACS Credentialing Guidelines, Policy and Procedures**

UNCSA subscribes to the Southern Association of Colleges & Schools guidelines for faculty credentialing and utilizes the following sources as its guidelines, policy and procedures when determining acceptable qualifications for faculty. The text below is quoted from the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools' *Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement*.

#### Comprehensive Standard 3.7.1

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.

Furthermore, an excerpt from the *Faculty Credentials Guidelines* that was approved by the College Delegate Assembly of SACS in December 2006 states:

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.

### **UNCSA Faculty Qualification Requirements**

- ❖ Faculty Teaching Graduate Courses
  1. Earned doctorate/terminal degree in the teaching discipline or a related discipline *or*
  2. Equivalent professional/experiential qualifications *or*
  3. Equivalent combination of education and professional experience
- ❖ Faculty Teaching Undergraduate Courses Only
  1. Earned doctorate or master's degree in the teaching discipline *or*
  2. Earned master's degree with a minimum of 18 graduate semester hours in the teaching discipline *or*
  3. Equivalent professional/experiential qualifications *or*
  4. Equivalent combination of education and professional experience

### **Reviewing & Documenting Qualifications**

#### **Academic Degrees**

Academic degrees are documented by an official transcript (paper or electronic). An official transcript must be sent from the conferring institution directly to the Office of the Dean for dean review. The dean is responsible for confirming receipt of an official document and determining if the degree and/or coursework is acceptable for the courses to be taught. A second review will be performed by the Provost or Vice Provost when the official transcripts are forwarded to the Office of Faculty Affairs.

- Paper Transcripts
 

Official paper transcripts will be mailed in a sealed envelope with the Registrar's signature stamped across the seal of the envelope. Usually, a document describing the security features, such as a raised seal or a watermark, will accompany the transcript or be noted on the transcript itself. Paper transcripts should be attached to the *Certification of Credentials & Qualifications to Teach for Faculty Appointment* form.

- **Electronic Transcripts**  
When a conferring institution sends electronic transcripts, it will usually send an advisory email to the recipient with instructions to access the electronic transcript. Security features may be described in this notification email. Often, transcripts are a certified PDF and the certification will be visible when the transcript is accessed. Electronic transcripts should be uploaded to the appropriate folder on superman.
- **Unofficial Transcripts**  
Candidates hired on the basis of submission of unofficial transcripts must submit official transcripts within 30 days of the date of hire. Failure to provide the University with official academic transcripts will result in termination of employment. It is the school's/division's responsibility to ensure official transcripts are submitted. Upon receipt of official transcripts, the school/division must submit an updated *Certification of Credentials & Qualifications to Teach for Faculty Appointment* form indicating receipt of official transcripts.
- **Foreign Degrees**  
UNCSA may accept degrees from colleges and university located outside of the United States, upon review of official academic transcripts and credentials. If the highest earned degree is from a foreign university, a *course-by-course* foreign credential verification must be submitted. The candidate is responsible for obtaining the verification and submitting it to the Office of the Dean.

The National Association of Credential Evaluation Services ([www.naces.org](http://www.naces.org)) provides a list of credential evaluation services who may be contacted for assistance in evaluating foreign credentials.

### **Professional/Experiential Qualifications**

The professional portfolio documents the candidate's professional/experiential qualifications to teach. Refer to *UNCSA Professional Portfolio Requirements for Certification of Professional/Experiential Qualifications* for guidance on content and format. Professional portfolios must be submitted prior to a formal offer of employment.

It is the dean's responsibility to document the relationship of the candidate's competencies to course objectives using the *Certification of Credentials & Qualifications to Teach for Faculty Appointment* form. Basically, this is a description of the individual's experience as it relates to course objectives and how that experience qualifies the candidate to teach the course objective. It is important there is sufficient and compelling data supporting the candidate's qualification to teach the class. Remember, the higher the traditional degree expectations, the more challenging the justification will be for professional/experiential qualifications.

Competencies include related work experiences in the field, professional licensure and certifications, honors and awards, continuous documented excellence in teaching, research or other demonstrated competencies, and achievements that contribute to effective teaching and student learning outcomes.

### **Reference**

*Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement*

<http://www.sacscoc.org/pdf/2012PrinciplesOfAccreditation.pdf>

Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools

*Faculty Credentials Guidelines*

College Delegate Assembly of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools

<http://www.sacscoc.org/pdf/081705/faculty%20credentials.pdf>

*UNCSA Professional Portfolio Requirements for Certification of Professional/Experiential Qualifications*

UNCSA Office of Faculty Affairs

<http://www.uncsa.edu/vcprovost/forms/Faculty%20Credentials%20&%20Qualifications/Professional%20Portfolio%20Requirements%202.pdf>

*Certification of Credentials & Qualifications to Teach for Faculty Appointment*

UNCSA Office of Faculty Affairs

<http://www.uncsa.edu/vcprovost/facultyaffairs.htm>

(Information for Departmental Administrators → VI. Faculty Credentials & Qualifications → 1. Certification of Credentials & Qualifications to Teach Form)