

Standard Operating Procedures Justifying, Approving, and Documenting Instructor Qualifications

I. Introduction

University regulations and the accreditation standards established by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) require that the university justify and document the qualifications of all instructors in relation to the content and level of the credit courses they teach.

Definitions of instructor roles and guidelines for determining the appropriateness of their qualifications are described in [REG 05.20.40](#). Instructors may be qualified by *academic credentials* (earned degrees and/or completed graduate coursework) and/or by *alternative credentials* (professional experience and/or demonstrated competency). Sections II and III below address procedures for these instances.

This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) applies to all individuals serving as Instructors of Record or Classroom Instructors, including visiting and adjunct faculty, post-doctoral fellows, administrators, and staff. This SOP pertains to the assignment of an instructor to teach a course for the first time, whether at the time of initial hire or later.

This SOP applies to all credit-bearing courses entered on students' transcripts as NC State courses, including co-requisite labs, study abroad courses, and courses offered through consortia, regardless of location or mode of delivery.

The department head, or program director for interdisciplinary programs outside of a department, is responsible for ensuring that instructors are qualified based on appropriate documentation. For instructors qualified by alternative credentials, the head or director must obtain the college dean's (or designee's) prior approval of those qualifications. Appropriate documentation must be filed no later than the end of the term in which the instructor first teaches the course.

Questions about the appropriateness of instructor qualifications for graduate courses may be referred to the Graduate School. Questions about appropriateness of qualifications for undergraduate courses may be referred to the Division of Academic and Student Affairs. Questions about the adequacy of documentation may be directed to the Office of the Provost.

II. Procedures for Instructors Qualified by Academic Credentials

A. Justification

Instructional assignments made on the basis of appropriate, completed academic degrees or coursework, if consistent with REG 05.20.40, Section 4.1, do not require written justification.

B. Approval

If the instructor's academic qualifications meet university requirements for academic credentials (REG 05.20.40, Section 4.1), the department head or program director may proceed with the assignment without the college dean's approval.

In addition and in parallel, instructors of graduate courses must also be appointed by the Graduate School as members or associate members of the graduate faculty. Information

about eligibility for and approval of full or associate graduate faculty status is described in [REG 02.40.01](#) and in the [Graduate Administrative Handbook](#).

C. Documentation

A transcript is expected as documentation of academic degrees and coursework. See Section IV for information about filing documentation.

Required Transcripts:

All Instructors Whose Initial Appointments are Posted on or after July 1, 2014

As of this date, all newly appointed faculty (full-time or part-time) are asked to provide official transcripts for all completed graduate degrees and coursework during the hiring process. Refer to Transcript Requirement for New Faculty Hires [provide link]. Current non-faculty employees assigned to Instructor of Record or Classroom Instructor roles (including post-doctoral fellows, administrators, and staff) are also required to provide official transcripts for all completed graduate degrees and coursework during the hiring process.

Transcripts are not required for NC State retired and emeritus faculty members who are Instructors of Record or Classroom Instructors.

All Instructors Whose Appointments were Posted before July 1, 2014

For non-tenure track and for pre-tenured faculty and other employees assigned to Instructor of Record or Classroom Instructor roles (including visiting and adjunct faculty, post-doctoral fellows, administrators, and staff) who are qualified by academic credentials, the required documentation is an official transcript provided by the issuing institution(s).

For tenured faculty, while an official transcript is preferred, a degree verification from the National Student Clearinghouse or an unofficial transcript is an acceptable alternative.

For graduate assistants serving as Instructors of Record or Classroom Instructors, a transcript is necessary for identifying 18 completed graduate semester hours in the field of the course.

III. Procedures for Instructors Qualified by Alternative Credentials

A. Justification

For instructors qualified by alternative (non-academic) credentials, or by a combination of alternative and academic credentials, department heads must prepare and file a written justification summarizing the experiences, competencies, and/or education that qualify the instructor to teach a particular course. This justification should explain the relationship of the alternative credentials to the content and level of the course. (A template is provided below.)

B. Approval

The department head, or program director for interdisciplinary programs outside of a department, will submit the written justification to the college dean (or designee) for approval prior to the beginning of the semester. The department head, dean/designee, and Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs must sign the justification indicating approval of the alternative credentials.

In addition and in parallel, instructors of graduate courses must also be appointed by the Graduate School as members or associate members of the graduate faculty. Information

about eligibility for and approval of full or associate graduate faculty status is described in [REG 02.40.01](#) and in the [Graduate Administrative Handbook](#).

C. Documentation

The department head or director will forward a copy of the signed justification and approval form to Human Resources (HR). See Section II.C above for information about transcript requirements.

Department heads will verify and file in department personnel folders documentation of the professional experiences or other competencies that demonstrate these instructors' capability to teach a particular course. Examples include letters verifying related employment, copies of licenses or certifications, related grants and contracts, honors and awards, teaching evaluations or other evidence.

IV. Assembling, Maintaining and Monitoring Instructor Qualifications

Official transcripts must be sent from the issuing institution directly to HR. Until a secure and searchable central repository is available, documentation of alternative credentials such as professional licenses, employer references, and awards will be filed and maintained by the academic department offering the course. Documentation must be filed before the end of the first term in which an instructor teaches a course.

HR will develop and maintain a secure central repository of official transcripts and, for faculty qualified based on alternative credentials, approval forms signed by the department head and dean (or designee). Department heads, deans, and other academic officials will have access to this documentation as needed to review, provide advice, and monitor qualifications.

Instructors newly hired on or after July 1, 2014, are being asked to send their transcripts directly to HR for filing in this repository.

For instructors hired before that date, HR and OIRP will move transcripts to a secure, central repository. If documentation is not yet available, HR will request a degree verification from the National Student Clearinghouse for tenured faculty. HR will contact untenured faculty and non-tenure track faculty for permission to order an official transcript.

If transcripts are unavailable for compelling reasons beyond the faculty member's control, the department may request a waiver of this requirement from the Provost's Office.

Each academic term, the Provost's Office or HR will send a report to each department and college listing the newly hired faculty, so that department heads can obtain any missing transcripts. The Provost's Office will also monitor compliance with the Regulation on Instructor Qualifications and documentation.

References:

REG 50.20.40 Instructor Qualifications

REG 02.40.01 Membership in the Graduate Faculty

SACSCOC Guidelines for Faculty Credentials

Transcript Requirement for Newly Hired Faculty (August 7, 2014) [location TBD]

Graduate Administrative Handbook

**NC State University
Alternative Credentials for Instructors
Justification and Approval**

This form may be used to comply with REG 05.20.40 and the related Standard Operating Procedure, "Justifying, Approving, and Documenting Instructor Qualifications."

If an instructor does not have academic credentials appropriate for the discipline and level of a course he or she is teaching, the instructor must be qualified through alternative credentials – professional experience and/or demonstrated competency – appropriate to the content and level of each course taught. The department head, or program director for interdisciplinary programs outside of a department, should provide the following information for review by the dean or dean's designee.

Justification

1. Department
2. Name of instructor
3. Course prefix and name
4. Description of the course
5. Summary of instructor's experience that qualifies him/her to deliver the course content at the appropriate level of instruction. *As appropriate, describe related undergraduate and graduate degrees, related work experiences in the field, scholarly publications and presented papers, professional licensure or certifications, honors and awards, continuous documented excellence in teaching, or other demonstrated competencies and achievements that contribute to effective teaching and students' mastery of learning outcomes identified for the course.*

Approval

Department Head _____
(signature) (date)

Dean or designee _____
(signature) (date)

Vice Provost for
Faculty Affairs _____
(signature) (date)

Reminder: For all graduate courses, the department head or program director should present credentials to the Graduate School.

Supporting Documentation

Scan and send to HR (address) this signed form and retain the original in the department personnel file.

Maintain in the department personnel file documentation of the alternative credentials, which may include any of the following.

1. Transcripts, in addition to the highest degree, showing relevant degree or coursework

2. Evidence of relevant work or professional experience, e.g., verification of employment, letters of reference
3. Licensure and certifications
4. List of scholarly publications and presented papers
5. Evidence of continuous documented excellence in teaching
6. Honors and awards
7. Other demonstrated competencies and achievements that contribute to effective teaching and student learning outcomes