

Stetson University Faculty Teaching Qualifications Guidelines

Guidelines

The following teaching qualifications guidelines are specific to Stetson University (SU) but draw heavily from and are in alignment with SACS Standard 6.2.a and corresponding SACS guidelines for compliance with this Standard. The guidelines apply to all instructors of record at SU, regardless of contract type (e.g., full-time faculty, adjunct faculty, etc.).

Stetson University is required to justify and document the qualifications of its faculty as part of its accreditation process under the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC); in particular, to demonstrate compliance with SACS Standard 6.2.a (Faculty Qualifications). To this end, the department chair must make a clear and compelling case to sufficiently support each faculty hire and teaching assignment within his or her unit. Appropriate supporting documentation must also be presented as evidence of the faculty member's qualifications. All hiring decisions and teaching assignments should consider competence, effectiveness, and capacity. There are two means by which an individual may be qualified to serve as an instructor of record for credit bearing courses at SU:

1. by academic credential(s) (degrees and coursework) alone or
2. by qualifications other than academic credentials (or combined with credentials) that are appropriate for teaching particular courses.

When making hiring decisions and teaching assignments, primary consideration should be given to the highest earned degree in the teaching discipline or related discipline in accordance with the academic credential guidelines outlined below.

Qualification by Academic Credential(s)

1. Faculty teaching baccalaureate courses may be qualified by:

Degree alone: Master's degree or higher in the teaching discipline or a related discipline

OR

Concentration: Master's and 18 hours: Master's degree or higher (in any discipline) with a concentration (minimum of 18 graduate semester hours) in the teaching discipline or related discipline.

OR

Master's Degree Equivalency: In the absence of a completed master's degree, a concentration may also be established via acceptable documentation confirming that 1.) as part of the individual's doctoral or terminal degree program, master's degree equivalency was achieved and 2.) at least 18 graduate semester hours in the teaching discipline or related discipline have been successfully completed.

2. Faculty teaching graduate coursework and first professional degree coursework, may be qualified by:

Degree alone: Earned doctorate or terminal degree in the teaching discipline or a related discipline

OR

Appropriate Master's degree and an active state license for contingent Counselor Education faculty teaching in the Counselor Education Program (as prescribed by CACREP).

Documentation Requirements for Academic Credentials (degrees and coursework)

Faculty who are qualified to teach based, either in whole or in part, on their academic credentials must have received their qualifying degree(s) and any other qualifying coursework from an accredited institution. Specifically, the institution must be accredited by an accrediting agency recognized by the United States Department of Education or the Council for Higher Education Accreditation. Further, this means that it is not sufficient for a program within an institution to be accredited. Rather, the credential granting institution itself must meet this requirement. Official transcripts reflecting successful completion of the qualifying credential(s) must be provided and must be on file in the Provost's Office. If the qualifying credential(s) is (are) from an institution outside of the United States, the U.S. equivalency of the credential(s) must be evaluated by an approved credential evaluation service, even if the transcript provided is in English. For more information in this regard, please refer to the section in this document titled "Foreign Faculty Qualifications."

Qualification by "Other" Demonstrated Competencies & Achievements

The academic credential guidelines above should be used as the primary means of qualification for all instructors of record at SU, regardless of contract type, at all levels (undergraduate and graduate), in all programs, and at all campuses. However, qualifications other than academic credentials (or combined with credentials) may be appropriate for teaching particular courses. Consideration of other teaching qualifications either in conjunction with or in lieu of academic credentials must be made on a case-by-case basis. Such cases should be exceptional and the evidence of other demonstrated competencies and achievements provided must be compelling. It should also show substantial and significant evidence of professional progress as related to the faculty member's teaching assignment. Other qualifications may include, as appropriate, relevant undergraduate and graduate degrees, a scholarly track record in the teaching discipline or related discipline, contract or grant work, 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.

Documentation Requirements for "Other" Demonstrated Competencies and Achievements

For all faculty qualified by means other than their academic credentials (degrees and coursework) alone, appropriate evidence of the other demonstrated competencies and achievements must be considered and presented during the initial hiring and course assignment considerations. The evidence provided

should include dates that correspond to the qualifying activities. When qualifying a faculty member on the basis of his or her related work experience in the field, specific job titles and relevant duties should also be considered. For all cases qualified by “other,” appropriate documentation, such as a current curriculum vita (CV), résumé, and/or other relevant documents should be provided (e.g., copies of current licensures, awards, certificates, diplomas).

Faculty hired utilizing the “Other” Demonstrated Competencies methodology shall be considered by the Department Chair or Program Director, and reviewed and approved by the Department Chair (if not the originator, and if applicable), and the Dean or their designee.

Faculty with “Other” Qualifications

The following are examples of “other” qualifications that would allow a faculty member to teach a course without the proper academic qualifications. Note that each of these examples would only apply to a specific course within a specific teaching discipline.

Substantial work experience in a field germane to the teaching discipline may be used to qualify an instructor of record to teach courses. The work experience must be documented and must be of substantial duration. A general rule is that the work experience must be at least five years in duration, but preferably more.

Certifications and licensures related to the teaching discipline can be used to qualify an instructor of record to teach courses. The certifications and licensures must be presented and must be active during the period the instructor of record will teach the course. All certifications and licensures must be earned from state, national, or international level organizations. Qualifications based on certifications and licensures should be accompanied by other considerations such as experience and academic credentials

Substantial awards and recognitions in a field germane to the teaching discipline can be used to qualify an instructor of record to teach courses. A general rule is that the awards and recognitions must be prestigious and generally recognized as such in the field. It is preferred that the awards and recognitions come from national or international level organizations. For example, an individual winning a Pulitzer Prize from their articles published in *The New York Times* could be qualified to teach a course in writing even though the individual does not hold an advanced degree in the field. Evidence of the award or recognition must be presented during the qualification process.

Substantial research contributions in a field germane to the teaching discipline can be used to qualify an instructor of record to teach courses. The research contributions must be published in peer-reviewed scholarly journals or presented by invitation at scholarly venues recognized by the teaching discipline. Documentation verifying the research contributions must be presented during the qualification process. For example, a chemical engineer may be qualified to teach an organic chemistry course if they have published extensively in the area of organic chemistry as evidenced by publications in journals such as *The Journal of Organic Chemistry*. It should be noted that a track record of scholarly publication is expected. Generally, a single or relatively small number of publications in the field do not merit qualification for an instructor of record to teach courses.

Foreign Faculty Qualifications

SU requires that all faculty, including adjuncts, whose highest degree was earned at an institution outside of the United States, have the foreign-earned credential evaluated by a service provider acceptable to the university, if necessary. For persons who will serve as instructors of record for credit bearing courses at SU, any additional foreign-earned degree(s) and course work that qualify the individual to do so also require a U.S. equivalency evaluation.

Course-by-course evaluations should be requested for each individual who will serve as an instructor of record for a credit bearing course at SU.

A U.S. equivalency evaluation must be obtained for a credential earned at non-U.S. institution, even if the transcript provided by that institution is in English.

When completing a U.S. equivalency evaluation, the individual submitting the request should provide a specific address and name of the SU representative to whom the official evaluation report should be sent to avoid mix-ups.

It is the responsibility of the candidate or faculty member to pay the fees associated with the U.S. equivalency evaluation. Academic Affairs does not provide additional funds for this purpose.

Official copies of U.S. equivalency evaluations and copies of foreign credential documents (e.g. transcripts, diplomas, degree certificates) shall be maintained in the Office of the Provost.

ROTC Faculty Justification

The requirements for officers are met through their job experience, performance evaluations, and special training, including the Officer Basic Course, the Officer Advanced Course, the Combined Arms Staff and Services School, and the Cadre/Faculty and Staff Development Program. The unit is certified by US Army Cadet Command, in Fort Monroe, Virginia, to offer instruction in accordance with the military's prescribed requirements for officer training.

The officers possess a thorough knowledge and experience of the army's organizational structure, mission objectives, functions, procedures, agency regulations, and policies, as well as a thorough knowledge and experience of military training and field training evaluation; possess tactical and leadership skills gained from successful platoon – or company-level leadership.

They also possess basic soldier skills, including map reading, land navigation, marksmanship, drill and ceremonies skills, and weapons experience with small arms, along with personal computer skills, including initialization, operation of Microsoft word-processing, spreadsheet, and graphics programs, performance of user maintenance, Windows environments, and familiarity with email and internet environments and operations.

The officers are able to teach effectively in a classroom setting, presenting both standardized instruction and creative workshops; have demonstrated instructor ability in military field training exercises and be able to instruct in a field environment for extended periods during training exercises.

These are the requirements set by the United States Army and United States Air Force, and any officer assigned as an ROTC instructor by the military must possess all of these requirements. ROTC instructors are assigned to Stetson by the military and are considered academically qualified by the University; therefore, no further review of their credentials would be necessary.

First-Year Seminar (FSEM) Courses

First-Year Seminar (FSEM) courses are courses provided exclusively to first-year students which do not have a disciplinary prefix, and where instructors are not limited to topics that align with their academic credentials. All First-Year Seminar courses introduce students to evidence-based writing at the college level based on peer-reviewed academic scholarship and university library research. These courses develop critical reading skills to better prepare students for daily classroom discussion, the delivery of short in-class presentations, and the composition of low, medium, and high-stakes writing assignments/research papers. Instructors are required to closely mentor students and to encourage/mandate the latter's use of Stetson University's student success apparatus (The Writing Center, etc.) to ensure a successful transition into college-level work.

Stetson University considers every faculty member with a master's degree or 18 graduate credit hours in a discipline as qualified to teach a FSEM course which helps introduce students to the critical skills they need to succeed at the college level. Faculty members (as well as staff members who meet the criteria mentioned above) interested in developing and teaching a FSEM course must first approach the Chair of their academic department, or the Director of the FSEM Program if the instructor is not located in any academic department, to discuss the mission and vision of the course and how it aligns with the mission and vision of the FSEM Program. The faculty/staff member must then fill out a New Course Approval Form which will undergo the course approval process.