

MEMORANDUM

TO: Academic Deans

FROM: Sheldon Ekland-Olson
Executive Vice President and Provost

DATE: March 6, 2006

RE: Faculty Credentialing

As you know, we have begun our preparations for our reaffirmation of accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools' Commission of Colleges (SACS-COC). Among the requirements with which we must show compliance is one dealing with faculty credentials, and this simply means that an institution must document that its faculty are qualified to teach what they teach. The specific SACS-COC requirement (Comprehensive Requirement 3.7.1) is given in the attached document. This requirement affects all of our professional faculty (i.e., all faculty except Assistant Instructors). I have confidence that our faculty will more than satisfy the SACS requirements, but it is the documentation part of the requirements that we need to address.

Effective with the 2005-06 academic year, the Provost's Office must have in its faculty files official documentation showing completion of the doctoral degree (or the terminal degree for the field as appropriate for the discipline). For tenured faculty, an official degree verification showing the field of study may be adequate. For faculty with only a master's degrees in disciplines for which the doctoral degree is the terminal degree, an original transcript(s) showing completion of the master's degree and the necessary graduate coursework in the teaching discipline (in accordance with SACS-COC guidance) is required. Faculty without degrees in their teaching discipline as specified by SACS-COC criteria will be credentialed on a case-by-case basis, and additional information may be needed and may have to be gathered by the faculty member. This new policy will be implemented as follows:

1. Current Faculty: To the extent possible, faculty credentials for current faculty (i.e., employed during AY2005-06) will be solicited and paid for by the Provost's Office. Faculty credentials will be obtained as follows:
 - a. Tenured Faculty: the Provost's Office will seek official degree certifications from the institutions which awarded the highest degree obtained by the faculty member. This will not require any action of your part or that of your faculty unless an institution does not provide such certifications or it requires permission of the faculty member for this certification. If so, then the faculty member will be asked to sign a release (see attached) to that effect. Faculty desiring to acquire the certification document themselves may do so at their own expense, but this document must be provided to the Provost Office during AY2005-06.
 - i. Tenured faculty whose field of highest degree does not match the field of the courses they are teaching during AY2006-07 may need to be credentialed further.

If additional credentials are needed to determine actual coursework taken to comply with SACS-COC credentialing guidelines, the Provost's Office will have to obtain original transcripts, and those faculty will be asked to sign a release (see attached) giving this office permission to obtain those transcripts or other credentialing information from the institution where the terminal degree or master's degree was received. Again, faculty desiring to provide credentialing information themselves may do so at their own expense, but these credentials must be provided to the Provost Office during AY2005-06.

- ii. If any further documentation is needed, the faculty member will be responsible for acquiring the information needed and working with their departmental office or school to complete the credentialing.
 - b. Tenure-Track and Non-Tenured Faculty: the Provost's Office will obtain official transcripts of work for the highest degree obtained by the faculty member. These faculty will be asked to sign a release (see attached) giving this office permission to obtain official transcripts from the institution. Faculty desiring to provide official transcripts themselves may do so at their own expense, but these credentials must be provided to the Provost Office during AY2005-06.
2. Future Faculty: All faculty hired during AY2005-06 and beyond and starting employment during AY2006-07 and beyond will be asked to sign a release (see attached) giving this office permission to obtain official transcripts from the institution where the terminal degree or master's degree was received. This release will be submitted with the PAR for approval by the Provost. Other information that may be needed will be obtained by the faculty member or with the faculty member's permission as appropriate. Faculty desiring to provide credentialing information may do so at their own expense, but these credentials must be provided with the PAR. PARs will not be signed until credentials have been received by this office or this office has been authorized to secure those credentials.

Because it will take some time for us to complete this credentialing process, I ask that you send this memorandum with its attachments to your department chairs or program areas in the very near future and ask them to distribute them to their faculty.

If you have any questions, please contact Neal E. Armstrong at 232-3305 or at neal_armstrong@mail.utexas.edu.

Attachments: SACS/COC Comprehensive Standard 3.7.1
Authorization Forms

cc: William Powers, Jr., President
Neal E. Armstrong, Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs and SACS Accreditation Liaison
Dorothea K. Adams, Associate Vice President

SACS-COC FACULTY CREDENTIALING REQUIREMENTS

COMPREHENSIVE STANDARDS – represent good practices in higher education and establish a level of accomplishment expected of all member institutions. Compliance is expected and non-compliance is to be examined.

3.7 Faculty

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 in accordance with the guidelines listed below. 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.

Credential Guidelines:

- a. *Faculty teaching general education courses at the undergraduate level: doctor's 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: doctor's 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: doctor's 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). At least 25 percent of the discipline course hours in each undergraduate major are taught by faculty members holding the terminal degree—usually the earned doctorate—in the 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.*

Text in italics represent guidelines, and they are not part of the Comprehensive Standards

**THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT AND PROVOST**

**OFFICIAL DEGREE CERTIFICATION AUTHORIZATION
FOR CURRENT FACULTY**

TO: Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost

FROM: _____
Faculty Member's Name (First, Middle, Last)

DEPARTMENT: _____

I understand that official certification of my highest degree must be in my file in the Provost's Office at The University of Texas at Austin. I elect to satisfy this requirement for degree certification in the following manner:

I will secure official certification of my highest degree (i.e., degree certification, not an official transcript) from the granting institution and have it sent no later than August 31, 2006 directly to:

Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost
1 University Station G1000
The University of Texas at Austin
Austin, TX 78712-0538

I authorize The University of Texas at Austin to secure official certification (i.e., degree certification, not an official transcript) of my highest degree from the granting institution and to have my documentation sent to the Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost at the same address as above:

Name of Institution:		MM/YYYY Conferred:
Highest Degree Earned & Discipline		
Student Identification Number*:		Date of Birth:
Last Name:	First Name:	Middle Initial:
Name on student records:		

* Give student identification number if known. You do not need to provide your Social Security Number.

Faculty Member's Signature

Date

Printed Name

**THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT AND PROVOST**

**OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPT AUTHORIZATION
FOR CURRENT FACULTY**

TO: Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost

FROM: _____
Faculty Member's Name (First, Middle, Last)

DEPARTMENT: _____

I understand that official certification of my highest degree must be in my file in the Provost's Office at The University of Texas at Austin. I elect to satisfy this requirement for degree certification in the following manner:

I will secure official certification (i.e., official transcript) of my highest degree from the granting institution and have it sent no later than August 31, 2006 directly to:

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1 University Station G1000
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Austin, TX 78712-0538

I authorize The University of Texas at Austin to secure official certification (i.e., official transcript) of my highest degree from the granting institution and to have my documentation sent to the Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost at the same address as above:

Name of Institution:		MM/YYYY Conferred:
Highest Degree Earned & Discipline		
Student Identification Number*:		Date of Birth:
Last Name:	First Name:	Middle Initial:
Name on student records:		

* Give student identification number if known. You do not need to provide your Social Security Number.

Faculty Member's Signature

Date

Printed Name

**THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT AND PROVOST**

**OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPT AUTHORIZATION
FOR NEW FACULTY**

TO: Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost

FROM: _____
Faculty Member's Name (First, Middle, Last)

DEPARTMENT: _____

I understand that official certification of my highest degree must be received by The University of Texas at Austin prior to my date of hire. I elect to satisfy this requirement for degree certification in the following manner:

I will secure official certification (i.e., official transcript) of my highest degree from the granting institution and have it sent directly to:

Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost
1 University Station G1000
The University of Texas at Austin
Austin, TX 78712-0538

I authorize The University of Texas at Austin to secure official certification (i.e., official transcript) of my highest degree from the granting institution and to have it sent to the Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost at the same address as above:

Name of Institution:		MM/YYYY Conferred:
Highest Degree Earned & Discipline		
Student Identification Number*:		Date of Birth:
Last Name:	First Name:	Middle Initial:
Name on student records:		

* Give student identification number if known. You do not need to provide your Social Security Number.

Faculty Member's Signature

Date

Printed Name

Note: this form must be received in the Provost's Office with the PAR. PARs will not be signed until credentials have been received by this office or this office has been authorized to secure those credentials.