

Faculty Qualifications for Teaching Guidelines

Documenting the qualifications of an instructor of record is the responsibility of the department or school in which the course originates. In general, all **instructors of record** at Virginia Tech must meet the “credentialing” requirements outlined in the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) Faculty Credentials Guidelines. Those guidelines are summarized below (Table 1).

Table 1. Summary of SACSCOC faculty credentialing guidelines.

If the Instructor holds or is:	Then the Instructor is Sufficiently Credentialed to Teach:			
	Associate degree course not designed to transfer to a baccalaureate program	Associate degree course that transfers to a baccalaureate program	Baccalaureate degree course	Graduate or post-baccalaureate course work
Earned doctorate/terminal degree in the teaching discipline or a related discipline	✓	✓	✓	✓
Master's degree in the teaching discipline	✓	✓	✓	
Master's degree not in the teaching discipline but with 18 graduate credits in the teaching discipline	✓	✓	✓	
Graduate Teaching Assistant with 18 graduate credit hours in the teaching discipline with direct supervision by a faculty member experienced in the teaching discipline, regular in-service training, and planned and periodic evaluations	✓	✓	✓	
Bachelor's degree in teaching discipline	✓			
Associate's degree <i>and</i> demonstrated competencies in the teaching discipline	✓			

PLEASE NOTE: "It is the institution's obligation to justify and document the qualifications of its faculty. Determining the acceptability of faculty qualifications requires judicious use of professional judgment, especially when persons do not hold degrees in the teaching discipline or are qualified based on criteria other than their academic credentials. Similarly, persons holding a degree at the same or lower level than the level at which the course is taught require additional qualifications and the application of professional judgment. Additional justification is needed for these cases as compared to cases where the academic credentials are a 'perfect match' for the teaching assignments." Quoted from the SACSCOC Principles of Accreditation Resource Manual (2018, page 45).

In addition to the doctorate (Ph.D., Ed.D., 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/DO/Equivalent	Doctor of Medicine with board certification or board eligibility.
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

Due to the evolving nature of various master's degrees, this list should not be considered exhaustive. If a doctoral level course is to be taught by a faculty member whose master's degree is the highest degree that the faculty member has earned, then the department or school must provide an explanation of why the master's degree is sufficient to teach doctoral level courses.

**Virginia Tech recognizes that specific courses offered by the Graduate School promote teaching competency in graduate students as they prepare for future faculty careers. Completion of the following courses may be counted within the 18 graduate credit hours required for minimum qualifications:

- 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.

PROOF OF HIGHEST DEGREE

Virginia Tech requires *official transcripts* of the highest degree for all instructors of

record. Virginia Tech will accept electronic copies of the official transcript. In exceptional cases (if approved by the hiring department head/chair or school director and college dean), certification by the registrar or other appropriate official of the degree-granting institution of the highest degree awarded, or visual verification of appropriate documentation by the department head/chair or school director or their designee will be allowed.

Official transcripts for all salaried teaching faculty, adjunct faculty, and graduate teaching assistants are submitted to Human Resources via the dropbox feature at the following link: [Submit Documents to Human Resources](#)

Degree information is entered by Human Resources and stored electronically in the Banner Document Management System. Once this information is recorded in the Banner system, it should be reflected in the Faculty Online Credentialing System (FOCS) within a day or two.

STATEMENT OF FACULTY QUALIFICATIONS FOR TEACHING

Department heads/chairs and school directors are responsible for verifying the faculty member's qualifications to teach certain courses or subjects. For each instructor of record, a [Statement of Faculty Qualifications for Teaching](#) must be completed and include a signature by the department head/chair or school director indicating that the qualifications are accurate and sufficient.

The [Statement of Faculty Qualifications for Teaching](#) (previously known as the Transcript Cover Sheet) is a means of documenting the reasons that the department head/chair or school director believes the instructor is qualified to teach the courses listed on the form through degrees earned, work experiences in the field, professional licensure and certifications, honors and awards, or other achievements contributing to effective teaching and student learning outcomes. A copy of this statement is provided in Appendix A.

Once a statement has been reviewed and signed by the department head/chair or school director, it should be filed in the faculty member's personnel file in the department or school and be available upon request for verification.

It is important for department heads/chairs and school directors to think broadly in terms of what a particular faculty member or graduate teaching assistant would be certified to teach. In most cases, it would be sufficient to designate the subject area (e.g., PSYC) in which the person is certified to teach.

Virginia Tech routinely hires faculty with credentials from foreign institutions and these internationally educated faculty add to the diversity and richness of the teaching and learning environment. It is the responsibility of the department head/chair or school director to verify the quality and equivalency of any highest degree awarded from an international institution. The signature of the department head/chair or school director on the [Statement of Faculty Qualifications for Teaching](#) attests to the certification of equivalent international credentials.

CROSS-LISTED COURSES

It is the responsibility of the course origination department or school to verify the qualifications of the primary instructor, regardless if the course is cross-listed with other departments or schools.

OTHER QUALIFICATIONS FOR SPECIFIC FIELDS

Virginia Tech has developed the following faculty guide for departments or schools where the terminal degree may not be the only consideration for teaching competency. The [Statement of Faculty Qualifications for Teaching](#) from the department head/chair or school director must provide a thorough justification of other qualifications.

College of Architecture, Arts, and Design

School of Architecture, School of Design

Faculty members in tenure-track positions with the School of Architecture + Design typically hold a PhD, the MArch¹, or the MLA². For most courses, these degrees are in the teaching discipline or a closely related field and thus, are considered sufficient credentials for teaching at all levels. Professional registration is expected for those teaching design studios. Instructors are also expected to have a 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 and must be documented on the transcript cover sheet.

School of Visual Arts:

- Faculty members in tenure-track positions in Art History typically hold a doctorate degree. For most courses, these degrees are in the teaching discipline or a closely related field and thus, are considered sufficient credentials for teaching at all levels.
- In art, design, and new media, tenure-track faculty and faculty in instructor-level positions typically hold a terminal degree, usually the MFA. For most courses, these terminal degrees are in the teaching discipline or a closely related field and thus, are considered sufficient credentials for teaching at all levels. 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 and must be documented on the transcript cover sheet.

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

¹ The MArch is the terminal professional degree in architecture.

² The MLA is the terminal professional degree in landscape architecture.

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.

Theatre

- In the areas of theatre history and criticism, the doctorate (e.g., PhD, EdD, DA) is considered the terminal degree. For most courses, these degrees are in the teaching discipline or a closely related field and thus, are considered sufficient credentials for teaching at all levels.
- In the areas of performance, design, directing, technical theatre, or management, the MFA is considered a terminal degree. For most courses, these degrees are in the teaching discipline or a closely related field and thus, are considered sufficient credentials for teaching at all levels.
- 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. These alternative credentials will be considered sufficient credentials for teaching at all levels and must be documented on the [Statement of Faculty Qualifications for Teaching](#).
- Also, in the areas of performance, design, directing, technical theatre, or management, 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. These alternative credentials will be considered sufficient credentials for teaching at all levels and must be documented on the [Statement of Faculty Qualifications for Teaching](#).

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 make 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. The academic qualifications or professional qualifications must be documented on the transcript cover sheet.

- 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 [Statement of Faculty Qualifications for Teaching](#).

College of Engineering

Myers-Lawson School of Construction:

Faculty members in tenure-track positions with the Myers-Lawson School of Construction typically hold a doctorate degree. For most courses, these degrees are in the teaching discipline or a closely related field and thus, are considered sufficient credentials for teaching at all levels. 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 and must be documented 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 and must be documented on the [Statement of Faculty Qualifications for Teaching](#).

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 and must be documented on the [Statement of Faculty Qualifications for Teaching](#).

Modern and Classical Languages and Literatures

Faculty members in tenure-track positions typically hold a PhD in an appropriate field. For most courses, these degrees are in the teaching discipline or a closely related field and thus, are considered sufficient credentials for teaching at all levels. 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. Virginia Tech's regional accreditor, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) does not consider being a native speaker alone to be sufficient qualifications for teaching a foreign language course.

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).
- Faculty hired in any of these ranks would be considered qualified to teach at the graduate and undergraduate level in the College of Veterinary Medicine.

Appendix A

STATEMENT OF FACULTY QUALIFICATIONS FOR TEACHING

Instructors of record must have teaching credentials verified by the department head/chair from which the course(s) originates **BEFORE** being allowed to teach. If the instructor of record attains new degrees/qualifications or new teaching responsibilities (i.e., new subject), this course credentialing document must be resubmitted.

SECTION I. INSTRUCTOR OF RECORD INFORMATION

_____ Name	_____ VT ID Number
_____ Address/Mail Code	
_____ Name of Hiring Dept.	_____ Name of Course Dept (if different)

Please indicate the person's current primary VT designation:

- Salaried Faculty Member (Teaching and Research)
- Salaried Faculty Member (Administrative/Professional)
- Adjunct Instructor (wage or unpaid)
- Graduate Student (GTA, GA, Graduate Instructor)
- Other (please explain: _____)

SECTION IIA. QUALIFICATIONS FOR TEACHING

For Salaried Faculty (Teaching and Research) ONLY

Please indicate the reason that the faculty member has been deemed qualified to teach:

- Doctorate/Terminal degree in teaching or related discipline (qualified for undergraduate or graduate courses).
- Additional qualifications explained in the Other Qualifications section (Section IIB).
- Eighteen (18) graduate hours or master's degree in teaching or related discipline (these faculty are typically qualified to teach undergraduate courses only). Please indicate the discipline in which the graduate hours were earned in Section IIB

For Graduate Students, Adjunct Instructors and those designated as Other ONLY

Please indicate the reason that the instructor has been deemed qualified to teach:

- Eighteen (18) graduate hours or master's degree in teaching or related discipline (typically qualified for undergraduate courses only). Please indicate the discipline in which the graduate hours were earned in Section IIB
- Doctoral (or terminal) degree in teaching or related discipline

Additional qualifications explained in the Other Qualifications section (Section IIB).

SECTION IIB. OTHER QUALIFICATIONS

Include professional licensure and certifications, awards, commendations, publications, professional experience, etc. **This box can also be used to explain why the faculty member's degree is appropriate even if it is not in precisely the same discipline as the course.** If the faculty member's highest degree is a masters degree and the faculty member will be teaching a 5000+ level course, please provide a justification. If it is the case that the master's degree is a terminal degree, please note that here.

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SECTION III. COURSE INFORMATION

Courses that this instructor of record is approved to teach:

Subject Abbreviation (e.g., PSYC):	Specific courses only (please list below) <input type="checkbox"/>
	All undergraduate courses <input type="checkbox"/>
	All graduate courses <input type="checkbox"/>
Subject Abbreviation (e.g., PSYC):	Specific courses only (please list below) <input type="checkbox"/>
	All undergraduate courses <input type="checkbox"/>
	All graduate courses <input type="checkbox"/>

If the instructor of record is approved to teach only specific courses, please list those courses here:

Prefix	Course Number (Title is optional)

NOTE: If the instructor of record is assigned to a course with a prefix that is different than the one(s) listed above, another statement of faculty qualifications must be submitted.

SECTION IV. VERIFICATION OF INTERNATIONAL CREDENTIALS

- Degree awarded by non-U.S. institution has been determined to be equivalent to U.S. degree and is appropriate to the teaching discipline. See *VT Credentials Guidelines* document, available at www.provost.vt.edu, for required steps.

Equivalent U.S. degree level and major: _____

SECTION V. DEPARTMENT HEAD/CHAIR VERIFICATION

Dept Head/Chair or School Director Name

Dept Head/Chair or School Director Signature

Date

SECTION VI. DEPARTMENT CONTACT INFORMATION

Department Contact Name

Mail Code

Email

Phoen

NOTE:

Once signed, please keep this statement in the faculty member's departmental personnel file.