

UTD Guidelines and Procedures for Credentialing Faculty

It is the policy of The University of Texas at Dallas to ensure that all faculty (i.e., instructors of record) possess the academic preparation, training, and experience to teach in an academic setting and meet or exceed the minimum requirements of accrediting bodies and state agencies. This policy applies to all full- and part-time faculty, including tenured, tenure-track, clinical, and lecturer positions as well as teaching assistants who will have primary responsibility for teaching an undergraduate course for credit and/or assigning final grades.

I. The Role of the Provost and the Provost's Office

The Provost is responsible for the verification and validation of all faculty credential requirements. The verification and validation of these requirements will be compiled and listed on the appropriate credentialing form for tenured and tenure-track faculty, non-tenure track faculty, and graduate teaching assistants. These forms combine the educational and experience requirement information from applicable accrediting agencies and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS), and identify and list the credentialing requirements for faculty members teaching in each School at the University.

The forms, the transcripts, letters of recommendation, and the current curriculum vitae that will accompany the forms will be stored in the faculty members' files in the Provost's Office. The Provost's Office will also maintain an electronic database of faculty credentials. The Provost's Office will use the database to provide accurate, timely information to various accrediting agencies, federal, state, local agencies and college departments.

II. The Role of Deans

Prior to any instructor's appointment with the University, whether as a tenured or tenure-track faculty member, a clinical faculty member, a senior lecturer, a lecturer, a part-time faculty member, or a teaching assistant who will be teaching and grading a course, the Dean of the School shall examine and approve the prospective instructor's credentialing file to ensure that the credentials meet the requirements listed by the respective accrediting agency. The Dean will work with the Department Head, Program Head, or Associate Dean (as appropriate) to acquire the documents required for the credentialing process. The Dean will forward the completed credentialing form as well as the transcript, letters of recommendation, and curriculum vita for each instructor to the Provost's Office where the documents will be recorded and stored.

III. The Role of Department Heads, Program Heads, and/or Associate Deans

Prior to any instructor's appointment with the University, the Department Head, Program Head, or Associate Dean (as appropriate) will examine the prospective instructor's credentials to verify that the credentials meet the requirements of the position. If a transcript is unclear, the University will contact the institution producing the transcript, and request that the institution provide information regarding the transcript or courses in question. In the event, the institution ceases to exist and there are no records or method of verification, the instructor may be required to provide references to support academic course work. Transcripts from universities outside the United States must be evaluated by external reviewers prior to the appointment of the instructor.

In cases where the instructor does not have the eighteen (18) hours in the discipline in which he or she will teach (as required by SACS), exceptional alternative qualifications will need to be documented to justify the appointment of the instructor. These qualifications may include diplomas or certificates earned, professional licensure and certifications, honors and awards, publications and presentations in the field, and other demonstrated competencies. Relevant documentation beyond the curriculum vita will be forwarded to the Dean of the School for verification and signature and subsequently to the Provost's Office where the material will be placed into the instructor's file. The complete credentialing file is due at the Provost's Office before any instructor is allowed to teach any class.

IV. The Role of Faculty

With the exception of graduate teaching assistants who are using their University of Texas at Dallas transcript to verify that they have eighteen (18) hours in the requisite discipline, it is the responsibility of the prospective instructor to provide the University with all of the documentation needed to verify their credentials. This documentation includes, but is not limited to, a curriculum vita, resume supplement, official transcripts (indicating terminal degree or other appropriate transcripts) appropriate licenses or certifications, and the verification of work related to teaching experience (as needed). The cost to obtain official transcripts and copies of licenses and certifications is borne by the prospective instructor. It is the responsibility of faculty members teaching in disciplines that require licensure and/or certification to acquire and maintain those credentials, and to provide documentation of licensure and certification for inclusion in the faculty members' credentialing file in the Provost's Office. The University may periodically request updated documents from faculty members to maintain the credentialing files. New faculty members must provide an official transcript at time of hire. Official transcripts are defined as those transcripts transmitted directly from the issuing institution to the University's department to which the instructor will be assigned.

V. Currently Employed Faculty with Insufficient Documentation

Once a semester, the Provost's Office will coordinate with the Office of Strategic Planning and Analysis to create a complete listing by department, of all faculty members of record appointments. The Provost's Office will perform a review to ensure a completed faculty credentialing file is on file for all faculty members with a current appointment. The Provost's Office will also periodically conduct an audit of faculty members who are currently employed to determine whether there is sufficient documentation to justify teaching the classes to which each instructor has been assigned. The Provost's Office will notify the appropriate Dean if there are any discrepancies or deficiencies in an instructor's credentialing file. If there are discrepancies or deficiencies, the Dean must submit the required credential documents within forty-five (45) days for tenured and tenure-track faculty and thirty (30) days for clinical faculty, senior lecturers, lecturers, part-time faculty, graduate teaching assistants, and all other instructors of record.

VI. Alternative Credentialing

When the credentials of the person do not meet the stated standards, but the prospective instructor possesses outstanding professional experience and demonstrated contributions to the teaching discipline, the individual may be alternatively credentialed on recommendation of the Dean and approval of the Provost. Sufficient objective documentation to support outstanding experience and demonstrated contributions are required to warrant consideration. The candidate for alternative credentialing must provide to the Provost, through the appropriate Dean, the following documents:

- a.** current resume or curriculum vita;
- b.** copy of official transcript(s);
- c.** three letters of recommendation; and
- d.** a completed credentialing form by the instructor that addresses specific outstanding professional experience and specific demonstrated contributions toward the teaching discipline.

VII. Official Transcripts

For purposes of this policy, an official transcript is defined as a transcript or other academic record that includes notation that it is official. Each individual official transcript must meet the authentication criteria based on that institution's standards. The transcripts must possess all of the following:

- a.** the issuing institution's official seal;
- b.** signature of the appropriate authorizing agent, preferable the institution's Registrar;
- c.** the institution's official letterhead or stationary;
- d.** the institution's watermark or other identifier; and

e. date of issue.

The official transcripts are required to be sent to the instructor's Department Head, Program Head, or Associate Dean (as appropriate). Official transcripts that are issued to the former student (i.e., the instructor of record) are acceptable as long as they meet the criteria defined above. With the exception of graduate teaching assistants who will be using their UTD transcript to demonstrate that they have eighteen (18) hours in the appropriate discipline, it is the responsibility of the instructor to provide the official transcript. The Dean and the Provost are responsible for ensuring the authenticity of the transcript.

VIII. Foreign Transcripts

All transcripts submitted from foreign universities or schools by a prospective hire must be evaluated for equivalency to United States accredited course work by a University approved agency. All costs for these services will be borne by the Provost's Office. Only course work and degrees granted by an accredited college or university, or an acceptable evaluation of foreign course work and degrees will be accepted for credentialing faculty members. The Provost's Office maintains and distributes information regarding the processing of foreign transcripts.

IX. Transcripts from Non-Regional Accredited Institutions

The hiring of individuals whose qualifying degree is from a non-regionally accredited institution in the United States (U.S.) will be considered on a case-by-case basis. When hiring such individuals, Deans must consider additional criteria beyond those listed in the Certification of Credential form. Criteria to be considered include the degree issuing institution's reputation, whether the institution is accredited or recognized by other agencies or organizations, and a thorough evaluation of the candidate's course work and experience. If such a hire is deemed desirable, then the Dean must fully evaluate the instructor's educational background and experience, and document the findings in a memorandum to the Provost. If the Provost agrees that the individual possesses the appropriate academic preparation and experience, the Dean will prepare the instructor credentialing file in accordance with current standards and include the documentation of the findings in the file.

X. Pending Credentialing File

In rare instances, it may be necessary to have a faculty member begin teaching prior to the receipt of an official transcript. In these cases, a file will be prepared by the Dean containing all of the information (current resume or curriculum vita, three letters of recommendation, and a completed credentialing form) except the official transcript(s). An unofficial transcript must be included in the file to show that the individual meets the credential requirements. A copy of the request for an official transcript must be included in the file. The Dean will call the University from which the potential faculty member or lecturer graduated to obtain over the phone confirmation of the degree and major field.

Additionally, the Dean will attempt to confirm receipt of the transcript request and if there is any type of hold on the release of the transcript. Once the official transcript arrives, it will be placed in the credentialing file and all necessary signatures will be obtained. For tenured and tenure-track faculty, there is a maximum forty five (45) day period where a credentialing file can be listed as “Pending” from the receipt of application. For all other faculty members, the file can be listed as pending for no more than thirty (30) days.

If after the respective thirty (30) or (45) day pending period has elapsed and the credentialing file has not been removed from “pending” status, the individual will not be considered for hire, or if already employed, the individual will be removed from his or her assignment. Removal may result in the instructor’s placement on Administrative Leave, with or without pay, until the matter has been resolved. When the required documents have been received, the faculty member’s respective Dean will re-certify and place the faculty member in the former assignment.