I. PURPOSE & INTENT

This University of South Florida (USF) Policy is designed to address the Regulations and procedures related to faculty credentials for teaching as an instructor of record as specified in Principle 6.2a (Faculty Qualifications) of the Principles of Accreditation, Foundation for Quality Enhancement, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) and the SACSCOC Faculty Credentials Guidelines. The Policy provides a foundation for the execution of faculty credentialing aligned with best practices in higher education.

II. STATEMENT OF POLICY

All instructors of record for each credit-bearing course taught by USF must, at a minimum, meet the expectations for faculty credentialing delineated by SACSCOC. USF will require the following as evidence of faculty qualifications.

1. Instructors of record teaching general education courses at the undergraduate level and/or baccalaureate courses will hold an earned doctorate or master’s degree in the teaching discipline or a master’s degree with a minimum of 18 graduate semester hours (or equivalent) in the teaching discipline.

2. Instructors of record teaching graduate and post-baccalaureate courses must hold an earned doctorate or the terminal degree in the teaching discipline or acceptably related field.

3. Graduate teaching assistants who are instructors of record must hold a master’s degree in the teaching discipline or 18 graduate semester hours in the teaching discipline, and will be directly supervised by a faculty member holding appropriate qualifications in the teaching discipline, will receive regular in-service
training, and will receive planned and periodic evaluations. Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTA) may provide support to a qualified instructor teaching a graduate course, but the GTA may not be the instructor of record and may not assist with teaching a graduate level course in which the GTA might enroll at some time in their degree program.

Exceptions may be made for individuals who do not meet the above qualifications but who are considered by the department to possess other demonstrated competencies and achievements that provide documented evidence to support effective teaching and student achievement. All such exceptions must be approved in writing by the department chair and dean and placed in the faculty member’s departmental file.

*Departments may develop their own formal credentialing procedures.

III. DEFINITIONS

A. An Instructor of Record is the individual designated in the USF student information system by the academic unit as responsible for a credit-bearing course. Team taught courses may have multiple instructors of record.

B. Faculty Credentialing, according to SACSCOC (2012), is the process by which an institution demonstrates that it “employs competent faculty members qualified to accomplish the mission and goals of the institution.” Credentialing must be evidence based and demonstrably executed.

IV. DOCUMENTATION

Each USF Campus will develop and administer procedures to establish and monitor faculty credentialing. In all cases, every instructor of record assigned to teach a credit-bearing undergraduate and/or graduate course must submit the documentation necessary to confirm the required qualifications. Such documentation includes, but is not limited to, the following:

1. Official documentation of the highest degree held by the instructor of record. Documentation of the highest degree held is normally the required number of official transcripts from the institution that awarded the degree or the agency that is the custodian of records. Only in cases where the required number of official transcripts cannot be obtained, original correspondence verifying the degree awarded may be accepted from the awarding institution or custodian of records but such correspondence must include sufficient detail to discern the degree level and teaching-related discipline. These documents are normally provided as a condition of employment; however, if the faculty member is assigned to teach in a different discipline, additional documentation may be required. Further, if it is
determined that official files of the USF campus employing the faculty member do not contain documents needed to confirm a faculty member’s qualifications, then the faculty member must provide such documents upon request of the college dean. In those instances where an individual does not hold a degree in the discipline taught and confirmation of qualifications is, therefore, based on an examination of the number of graduate hours completed, the individual must provide the required number of official transcripts from each institution that awarded graduate credit in the discipline for which confirmation is required. In cases where this procedure is used documentation must be sufficiently detailed to meet all regional and discipline-specific accreditation requirements.

2. Current Curriculum Vitae.

3. In those instances where a faculty member is assigned as the instructor of record for a course or courses based on credits earned from an institution outside the United States, it will be necessary for said faculty member to submit credentials to an independent agency for evaluation. The evaluation must be completed by an evaluation service acceptable to USF or independent, internal entity charged with this function. Costs, if any, associated with this service will be the responsibility of the faculty member. Information about recommended and approved independent evaluators may be obtained from the USF Tampa Office of Institutional Effectiveness, Academic Planning and Review or the Offices of the Regional Vice Chancellors at USF St. Petersburg and USF Sarasota-Manatee.

4. In the case of exceptions, documentation of the competencies and achievements that justify the exception must be on file.

*Current Responsible Office: Academic Affairs

*Refer to the appropriate Responsible Office website for a current name of the Vice President or other Responsible Officer.