I. INTRODUCTION (Purpose and Intent)

This University of South Florida System (USF System) Policy is designed to address the regulations and procedures related to faculty credentials for teaching as an instructor of record as specified in Comprehensive Standard 3.7.1 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. DEFINITIONS

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.

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.

III. STATEMENT OF POLICY

All instructors of record for each credit-bearing course taught by the University of South Florida must, at a minimum, meet the expectations for faculty credentialing delineated by SACSCOC in Comprehensive Standard 3.7.1 of the Principles of Accreditation: Foundation for Quality Enhancement and the SACSCOC Faculty Credentials Guidelines. The University of South Florida System 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 concentration in the teaching discipline (a minimum of 18 graduate semester hours in the teaching discipline).

2. Instructors of record teaching graduate and post-baccalaureate course work will hold an earned doctorate/terminal degree in the teaching discipline or a related discipline.
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.

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 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.

IV. DOCUMENTATION

Each institution in the USF System 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 would normally be an official transcript from the institution that awarded the degree.
or the agency that is the custodian of records. In lieu of an official transcript, 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 at the time of initial 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 member institution 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 an official transcript 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 holds a degree and/or graduate credit hours from an institution in another country, it may 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 the University System 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.

Authorized and Signed by:

Ralph Wilcox, Provost and Executive Vice President

Judy Genshaft, President