

Faculty Roster Compliance Do's & Don'ts

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Why does it matter? One of the more rigorous SACSCOC requirements for institutional accreditation is that every instructor be competent and well-qualified for each of the courses he/she is assigned to teach. Teaching a university course that is outside of one's academic degree preparation and that is not adequately justified with alternate and compelling evidence of the instructor's competence and expertise in the content of that course is grounds for a finding of noncompliance with accreditation standards. Given the large number of teaching assignments

Faculty Roster Instructions accompanies this guidance. Some clarification as to how to define the term, teaching discipline, is provided, and the strength of justifications is referenced. **Do: Note that when justifications require qualifications other than academic degrees, evidence of competence in the content of the course taught should be strong, if not exceptional.** Combining academic degrees and graduate credits with other evidence of competence is encouraged. The sample of a completed Faculty Roster Form provided here contains concrete examples of how courses taught should be justified with a combination of academic credentials and other evidence of course-related competence. Unfortunately, a justification for teaching a graduate course is not included in the sample. **Do: Familiarize yourself with the instructions for completing the Faculty Roster Form, and examine in depth the contents of the completed sample Form to better understand the expectations for producing compelling justifications of compliance.** Key elements of

most frequent causes for findings of noncompliance in CS 3.7.1 by peer evaluators. **Do:** Whenever there is not an obvious and clear match between the academic area of courses taught and the academic area of the instructor's advanced degrees, ensure that comments explaining the relationship of the instructor's academic preparation are provided, listings of relevant graduate courses completed are included, and other qualifications are cited as needed to present a strong justification.

3. **Do: Match the content of each course taught with citations of adequate qualifications of the instructor to teach that content.** The content of the course as reflected in the course title and course description should be the focus of reported faculty qualifications. The content of the course trump the discipline listing of the course in terms of importance in that regard, because the content of the course is not always represented well by its discipline listing, and some discipline listings of courses do not have matching disciplinary degrees in academia. A course such as a Freshman Experience Seminar does not require its instructors to have degrees from any particular discipline, but does require familiarity with higher education, the institution, and its resources as well as in-service training in the freshman experience and related skill sets and strategies for achieving student success in the transition to college life.
4. **Do: Note that when a total of earned graduate semester hours in a particular academic discipline in question is reported, it should be a precise number and include a listing of the course titles making up that total.** The sample of the completed Faculty Roster Form shows this expectation. **Do: It is better to list the titles of too few courses than to appear to pad the listing with courses that do not add value to the argument that the instructor is well-qualified for his/her teaching assignments. Add explanatory comments to the justification if some course titles do not appear related or are ambiguous.**
5. **Do: Whenever courses are taught across more than one academic discipline, be sure the minimum qualifications for teaching in each of those specific disciplines are met.** Note in the sample Form that Yolanda Bingham taught UT courses in three different academic disciplines: history, geography, and kinesiology—Karate. Her MA in history was a sufficient qualification for teaching UT history courses. Her master's degree along with 18 graduate semester hours in geography was sufficient for teaching UT courses in geography. But she had no relevant academic qualifications in Karate, so her black belt in Karate and her first alternate position to the US Olympic team in Karate represented strong evidence of her competence in Karate under Other Qualifications. Lesser accomplishments and achievements in Karate would have required the presentation of more detailed evidence of competence. **Caution—even when an appropriate graduate degree is present, there are instances where peer evaluators will be looking for evidence of disciplinary specializations that match the specialized content of the course (more on that below).**

6. **Don't: Be too terse or too general when describing Other Qualifications.** **Do:** Offset the absence of expected minimal academic degree/coursework qualifications with strong and specific arguments under Other Qualifications to why the instructor is qualified and competent to teach his/her assigned courses. as
- Note in the sample Form that Steig Cederholm taught a UT applied music course with only a bachelor's degree in music. What makes his case justified is the strong and specific evidence of other qualifications. It helps that his bachelor's degree in music performance (BM) was in music composition in which matched the undergraduate music composition content of the course he taught, but he lacked the expected advanced degree/graduate study in music composition. The offsetting other evidence of post-baccalaureate competence in music composition was strong: he is a published music composer with four produced symphonies and an opera; he has had public performances of his compositions; and he has music composition experience with a major symphony in Atlanta and a major opera in Houston. If the only evidence cited under Other Qualifications had been stated, "he had substantial professional experience in the field," without being more specific about the kinds and lengths of experience, levels of achievement, and organizations with which he worked, the justification would have been much less persuasive and would have constituted an assertion of music composition competence that was undocumented and lacking in substance (i.e., insufficient).
7. **Do:** Whenever graduate (G) courses are taught in a specific academic discipline, be sure the instructor has at least an earned doctorate or terminal degree in that same academic discipline (explaining why a particular terminal degree from another discipline is "related"). If not, be sure the instructor has at least a master's degree in the same academic discipline and additional strong evidence of advanced levels of competence to offset that lack of a terminal degree. Strong evidence would include post-master's/doctoral graduate semester hours of credit earned in the same academic discipline of the courses taught; evidence of research and scholarly accomplishments in the discipline; publications and presentations; extensive related professional experience; advanced licenses and certifications; awards or recognition reflecting the competence in question; etc.

8. Do: Whenever doctoral dissertation supervision is listed as a teaching assignment, ensure that the instructor of record has a doctoral degree in the same or a related academic field. If the supervisor is not in the same or a related field, explain the appropriateness of the relationship of the supervisor's disciplinary expertise and research achievements to the supervised doctoral candidate's dissertation research. If the supervisor does not have an earned doctorate, ensure that the supervisor has an exceptionally strong track record of professional and research achievements in the field and substantial success in supervising doctoral dissertations—report those under Other Qualifications. The key point here is that a doctoral dissertation supervisor should have sufficient disciplinary expertise and research accomplishments to properly guide and evaluate the dissertation research of the doctoral students under his/her supervision.

9. Do: Include in the Other Qualifications /Comments column a description of the faculty supervision, in-service training, and periodic evaluations that graduate teaching assistants who are instructors of record are expected to receive when they who do not have the requisite master's degree. List the graduate courses completed in the discipline in question toward the 18 or more semester hour guideline.

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