

## College Operating Procedures (COP)



**Procedure Title:** Faculty Qualifications and Credentialing  
**Procedure Number:** 03-1106  
**Originating Department:** Vice President of **Academic Affairs**

**Specific Authority:**

Board Policy: 6Hx6: 5.02  
Florida Statute: 1012.855  
Florida Administrative Code: 6A-14.060 (3)

**Procedure Actions:** Adopted: 06/1/2010; 2/15/2011; 3/4/2011;  
12/11/2013; 02/13/2015; 6/14/2018; 02/17/2020;  
02/14/2025

**Purpose Statement:** To outline the procedure to determine faculty qualifications and the credentialing process.

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### **GUIDELINES:**

Florida SouthWestern State College (FSW) employs competent faculty members qualified to accomplish the mission and goals of the institution. When determining acceptable qualifications of the faculty, FSW gives primary consideration to the highest earned degree in the discipline. FSW also considers competence, effectiveness, and capacity, including, as appropriate, undergraduate and graduate degrees, related work experiences in the field, professional licensure and certifications, honors and awards, continuous documented excellence in teaching, or other demonstrated competencies and achievements that contribute to effective teaching and student learning outcomes. Qualified faculty obtain degrees and course work from regionally accredited colleges and universities. Academic Deans are responsible for justifying and documenting the qualifications of FSW faculty. The Provost gives final approval for qualifying faculty.

The following standard practice is used for certification of qualified faculty.

1. In baccalaureate or credit transfer programs, a doctoral or master's degree from a regionally accredited institution of higher education in the teaching discipline or a master's degree and a minimum of 18 graduate semester credit hours in the teaching discipline.

2. In certificate programs that are terminal at the Associates Degree level, or for developmental education, alternative qualification may be used with appropriate supporting documentation.

Upon identifying candidates who are eligible to teach, the appropriate academic supervisor will review transcripts and other supporting materials to make an initial determination of the candidate's qualifications.

If it is determined the candidate is qualified to teach, a Faculty Qualification Form (FQF) will be completed to include:

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1. The approved teaching discipline and all courses the candidate is qualified to teach.
2. Only those degrees and coursework used to credential the faculty member (in most cases that will be the highest degree awarded) should be listed on the FQF.
3. Any relevant certifications, valid licenses, and verified work experience must be listed and included with the FQF if applicable and for alternatively qualified faculty. The alternate credential requirements are listed in each discipline as appropriate in the Instructional Credentialing Guidelines.

Unofficial transcripts may be used to initially certify a faculty member. All forms required of an employee, including any required academic transcripts and credentials, must be submitted within thirty (30) days of an employee's first day of employment or classes, whichever is later. The same standard of practice may be used for alternative credentialing materials, when unofficial copies may be used initially but official copies are required by the end of the first semester of teaching. Faculty who fail to produce official transcripts and/or alternative credentials will not be allowed to teach after one semester.

**Procedure:**

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2. If it is determined the candidate is qualified to teach, a Faculty Qualification Form (FQF) will be completed to include:
  - The approved teaching discipline and all courses the candidate is qualified to teach.
  - Only those degrees and coursework used to credential the faculty member (in most cases that will be the highest degree awarded) should be listed on the FQF.
  - Any relevant certifications, valid licenses, and verified work experience must be listed and included with the FQF if applicable. Ensure this information is provided for alternatively qualified faculty (as described in each discipline section of the Instructional Credentialing Guidelines).
3. Unofficial transcripts may be used to initially certify a faculty member; however, the individual must provide within 30 days of the first day of classes during their **first semester of teaching at the College** an official transcript from each institution that awarded credit in the discipline for which confirmation is required. The same standard of practice may be used for alternative credentialing materials, when unofficial copies may be used initially but official copies are required by the end of the first semester of teaching. Faculty who fail to produce official transcripts and/or alternative credentials will not be allowed to teach after one semester.
4. The degree, major, completion date, and relevant graduate courses must be highlighted on transcripts and attached to the Faculty Qualification Form.
5. When reviewing graduate transcripts that include quarter hours in the teaching discipline, the conversion formula is 0.667 semester hours for each quarter hour.

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6. The completed and approved form will be submitted to the Vice President of Academic Affairs. If approved, it will be loaded into Banner and displayed on the electronic faculty credentialing database.

7. Once the Faculty Qualification has been loaded into Banner and displayed on the electronic faculty credentialing database, faculty may be assigned to courses. Note that no faculty (full- time, adjunct, and dual enrollment) may be assigned to courses until the FQF process is complete.

8. When a faculty member has not taught for three (3) consecutive semesters, the FQF process must be completed again upon rehire. As described in number 7 above, faculty who are returning after not teaching for three (3) consecutive semesters may not be assigned to courses until the FQF process is complete.

9. When faculty are already credentialed to teach by one School or Division, any updates to add new courses to the FQF need only be completed by the School or Division and only for the courses in the School or Division and indicated as an "Update to the original FQF" on the faculty qualification form. An updated FQF will be included as an addition to the original FQF in the faculty member's human resources file.

10. In the rare case when a faculty member has been assigned to a course for which he or she is not already credentialed to teach, the School or Division must complete an updated FQF prior to the first day of class. For any faculty who has unresolved course credentialing issues on the first day of classes of the semester, the School or Division will have to remove the faculty from the schedule or have approval from the Provost to keep the faculty assigned to courses.