



Title: Instructional Personnel Credentialing Policy
Effective Date: February 21, 2023
Issuing Authority: Provost
Policy Contact: Vice Provost for Institutional Effectiveness
478-301-2070

Purpose

This policy sets forth the steps and requirements for verifying and storing the official credentials of all instructors of record.

Scope

This policy applies to all instructional personnel hired at Mercer University.

Exclusions

None

Policy Statement

Mercer University is responsible for justifying and documenting the qualifications of its instructional personnel as stated in Standard 6.2.a (Faculty qualifications) of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). Mercer University must ensure the quality of its instructional personnel in order to carry out the mission of the institution and the quality and integrity of its courses and degree and certificate programs.

Official transcripts are the primary source used to justify and document the qualifications of instructional personnel and must be provided to the appropriate Dean's office and electronically entered into Mercer University's system of record, Watermark Faculty Success.

Additional Resources

Procedures

1. Transcripts, official or unofficial, or other required credentials are requested during the application process.
2. Instructional personnel with degrees from countries other than the United States must have an academic equivalency evaluation for all transcripts and copies of diplomas stating the foreign degree(s) is equivalent to a U.S. degree required for the position.

- a. If requested, the foreign transcript must be translated if it is in a language other than English.
- b. The academic equivalency evaluation must be processed by an agency that is certified by the National Association of Credential Evaluation Services (NACES) to determine the U.S. equivalency.
- c. A course-by-course evaluation is required.

3. Official transcripts must be uploaded to Watermark Faculty Success by the appropriate Dean's office before the first day of employment with Mercer University. If not, that individual will not be eligible to provide instruction and may not be eligible for continued employment until such time as this requirement is met.

- a. In the event the institution has closed, candidate should contact the Department of Education for the state where the institution was located for information on how to obtain transcripts.
- b. In the event that a transcript is not yet available, but the candidate has met all requirements for the degree, the employee must provide official verification of degree completion using one of the two options as follows:
 - Diploma;
 - Official letter from the undergraduate and/or graduate school conferring the degree, stating that all requirements have been met.
- c. If the candidate's degree has not yet been conferred, they should request a letter confirming that they have met the requirements to graduate.
- d. The appropriate Dean's office may decide to offer a provisional appointment. Language within the appointment letter should mandate a deadline by which official transcripts must be submitted. Otherwise, the appointment will be terminated and the offer rescinded.

4. Instructional personnel hired to teach are required to provide official transcripts as follows:

- a. Official transcripts of graduate or professional academic work that document qualifications of position(s) being sought and for which compensation will be received; copies of transcripts from all other institutions attended.
- b. Transcripts stamped "Issued to Student" are not acceptable for accreditation review.
- c. Transcripts should be mailed to the appropriate Dean's Office.
- d. Examples of required transcripts are as follows:
 - A person with a master's degree in English, 18 graduate semester hours in Speech from a different institution, and doctorate in curriculum instruction applies for a full-time position as an English/Speech instructor and will be compensated at the

doctoral level. This person must provide copies of transcripts from all institutions they have attended and official transcripts for the following:

- The master's degree because it documents preparation for English.
 - The graduate hours in Speech because the position requires 18 semester graduate hours in Speech.
 - The doctorate because the person will be paid for his/her doctorate degree.
 - A person with a master's degree in history applies for a part-time job as a history instructor and will be compensated at the master's degree level. This person must supply official transcripts of the master's degree only.
- e. Instructional personnel who complete additional post baccalaureate academic credits must submit official transcripts of the additional academic credits, if required.

5. Paper and/or electronic transcripts sent directly from an institution or reputable third party to Mercer University must be maintained electronically.

- a. All transcripts must be stored in Watermark Faculty Success.
- b. Paper transcripts must be scanned and uploaded to associated degree records in the system.
- c. Electronic transcripts must be uploaded to associated degree records in the system.
- d. Due to possible protected/confidential information (SSN, date of birth, etc.) contained in the electronic transcript, transcripts are not to be emailed, and access should be limited to the designated representative(s).
 - Designated representatives include personnel in the respective Dean's Offices responsible for maintaining records, the Watermark Faculty Success Administrator, and the Vice Provost for Institutional Effectiveness.