

Rationale for 2004 Revisions to Graduate Faculty Criteria

Last Spring (2004), the Graduate Affairs Council (GAC) discussed graduate faculty status and the dean asked that the categories be reviewed in light of problems differentiating between adjunct faculty members and those that provided specific clinical expertise. Additionally, issues concerning how the current criteria were being applied across programs and their resultant review by the GAC subcommittee on graduate faculty status were of concern.

Subsequently, the Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA) instructed the GAC to review criteria for graduate faculty in light of the new Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) regulations. In the VPAA's services as a member of various SACS site visit teams, it is evident that the issue of faculty credentials is becoming more carefully scrutinized than it has been in the past. Radford University (RU) has not been sufficiently documenting or justifying granting graduate faculty status to those without the doctorate or MFA. The number of exceptions and the extent to which graduate status may give unrestricted teaching authority should also be revisited.

Although several people volunteered to serve on an *ad hoc* group this summer, very few were actually available to meet. However, there were a number of programs concerned about the potential restrictions of hiring master's prepared instructor's, especially in clinical practicum and/or or supervisory capacities.

In response to those concerns, faculty representatives and GAC members from the College of Health and Human Services and the College of Education and Human Development met several times this summer to draft possible revisions to the graduate faculty criteria. Dr. Seyfrit also discussed graduate faculty status concerns with Deans Castleberry and Sale, as well as seeking input from the Deans Council.

The working group developed several principles upon which to base suggested revisions.

- More closely align criteria to SACS credential-based criteria.
- Clarify the criteria so whether one meets graduate faculty criteria is more easily determined.
- Clearly outline the process for approval for non-exceptions and exceptions.
- Redefine and clearly delineate categories to allow for identification of adjunct and supervisory/clinical faculty.
- Allow a grace period so course scheduling is not disrupted.

The SACS criteria for those teaching graduate courses are listed in Section 3.7 of *Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement* (see below with subsection f. highlighted in **red**). The entire document can be found at <http://www.sacscoc.org/PrinciplesOfAccreditation.PDF>

3.7 Faculty

3.7.1 The institution employs competent faculty members qualified to accomplish the mission and goals of the institution. When determining acceptable qualifications of its faculty, an institution gives primary consideration to the highest earned degree in the discipline in accordance with the guidelines listed below. The institution 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. For all cases, the institution is responsible for justifying and documenting the qualifications of its faculty.

Credential Guidelines:

- a. *Faculty teaching general education courses at the undergraduate level: doctor's or master's degree in the teaching discipline or master's degree with a concentration in the teaching discipline (a minimum of 18 graduate semester hours in the teaching discipline).*
- b. *Faculty teaching associate degree courses designed for transfer to a baccalaureate degree: doctor's or master's degree in the teaching discipline or master's degree with a concentration in the teaching discipline (a minimum of 18 graduate semester hours in the teaching discipline).*
- c. *Faculty teaching associate degree courses not designed for transfer to the baccalaureate degree: bachelor's degree in the teaching discipline, or associate's degree and demonstrated competencies in the teaching discipline.*
- d. *Faculty teaching baccalaureate courses: doctor's or master's degree in the teaching discipline or master's degree with a concentration in the teaching discipline (minimum of 18 graduate semester hours in the teaching discipline). At least 25 percent of the discipline course hours in each undergraduate major are taught by faculty members holding the terminal degree—usually the earned doctorate—in the discipline.*
- e. ***Faculty teaching graduate and post-baccalaureate course work: earned doctorate/ terminal degree in the teaching discipline or a related discipline.***
- f. *Graduate teaching assistants: master's in the teaching discipline or 18 graduate semester hours in the teaching discipline, direct supervision by a faculty member experienced in the teaching discipline, regular in-service training, and planned and periodic evaluations.*

3.7.2 The institution regularly evaluates the effectiveness of each faculty member in accord with published criteria, regardless of contractual or tenured status.

3.7.3 The institution provides evidence of ongoing professional development of faculty as teachers, scholars, and practitioners.

3.7.4 The institution ensures adequate procedures for safeguarding and protecting academic freedom.

3.7.5 The institution publishes policies on the responsibility and authority of faculty in academic and governance matters.

The basic criterion for graduate faculty is a doctorate or MFA in the teaching discipline or related field. If a faculty member does not have an earned doctorate or MFA, then written justification giving compelling reasons why the person should teach graduate courses and documenting how the person's experience, training, and expertise are exceptional (i.e., equate to the doctorate or MFA level) must be documented.

Approved by the Graduate Affairs Council: October 8, 2004

Endorsed by the Faculty Senate: December 2, 2004

Approved by the Vice President for Academic Affairs: December 13, 2004

Graduate Faculty Criteria

- I. Graduate Faculty** (can teach graduate classes, supervise directed studies and recitals, chair and serve on exam and thesis committees; however, chairing a thesis committee may involve long-term service and care should be taken in assigning non-tenure/non-tenure track faculty as chairs):
- A.** Full-time
Tenure/tenure track faculty
Doctorate or MFA
Cover sheet (including any limitations), current vita (recommended by department, chair, college dean; approved by graduate dean; final approval by the Provost).
 - B.** Full-time
Special purpose, temporary, or A-P
No doctorate of MFA (or doctorate is not in teaching field)
Cover sheet (including any limitations), current vita, written justification (recommended by department, chair, college dean; reviewed and recommended by GAC subcommittee; approved by graduate dean; final approval by the Provost).
- II. Adjunct Graduate Faculty** (can teach graduate classes, supervise directed studies and recitals, and serve on exam and thesis committees):
- A.** Adjunct or part-time
Doctorate or MFA
Cover sheet (including any limitations), current vita (recommended by department, chair, college dean; approved by graduate dean; final approval by the Provost).
 - B.** Adjunct or part-time
No doctorate of MFA (or doctorate is not in teaching field)
Cover sheet (including any limitations), current vita, written justification (recommended by department, chair, college dean; reviewed and recommended by GAC subcommittee; approved by graduate dean; final approval by the Provost).
- III. Graduate Faculty Associate** (can teach or supervise graduate students in clinical, practica, internship, or similar courses):
- Faculty (usually adjunct but may be full-time employee) whose sole responsibility is to supervise graduate students in clinical, practica, internship, or other similar courses. Minimum of a master's degree and meeting other criteria outlined by each program and approved by the chair, college dean, and GAC (years of experience, licensure, etc.).

Cover sheet (including designated courses, current vita, written justification (recommended by department, chair, college dean; reviewed and recommended by GAC subcommittee; approved by graduate dean; final approval by the Provost).

For each category, limitations should be identified. For example, a faculty member without a doctorate, but with specific licensure, training, or other credentialing may be recommended for graduate faculty status for specific course(s). There may also be cases when faculty with a doctorate or MFA have limitations on their graduate faculty status, e.g., a faculty member is a department without graduate programs may have expertise that justifies graduate faculty status to teach a specific course in another department.

The suggested implementation is as follows:

Each graduate faculty membership would be for a period of five (5) years. At the end of the time period, a new application with a current vita would be submitted through the identical process.

To facilitate the implementation of the suggested changes, there would be a grace period of one (1) calendar year after approval of the new criteria and process. During that period, all current graduate faculty files would be reviewed and any faculty member meeting the doctorate/MFA standard would be classified as graduate faculty or adjunct graduate faculty. Others would be referred to their department for review.

After the departmental criteria for graduate faculty associate is determined and departments decide which classification is appropriate, new applications for graduate faculty, adjunct graduate faculty, or graduate faculty associate (with required justification) would be submitted for approval.

After the grace period, only faculty approved according to the new criteria and process will be able to teach graduate classes or serve on graduate committees.

The master list of graduate faculty members would be maintained in the College of Graduate and Extended Education and updated regularly on the graduate college website (i.e., <http://www.radford.edu/~gradcoll/faculty/index.html>). In order to monitor changes and to maintain currency, the list will be forwarded annually to department chairs (or school directors) and deans asking that changes be noted (e.g., retirements, separations, changes from adjunct to full-time or vice versa, etc., and that each graduate faculty member's status in the department be reaffirmed. In the absence of affirmative replies, names would be removed from the list.

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