



University of Central Florida
Procedure for Ensuring Sufficient Numbers of Full-time Instructional Faculty

BACKGROUND

To help assure that the university has a critical mass of full-time faculty members to ensure the quality and integrity of each of its academic programs, the university monitors the percent of student credit hours delivered by full-time faculty members by: program/discipline, location, and modality (distance learning vs. face-to-face).

Adequacy of faculty is referenced in SACSCOC Core Requirement 2.8¹:

The number of full-time faculty members is adequate to support the mission of the institution and to ensure the quality and integrity of its academic programs. Upon application for candidacy, an applicant institution demonstrates that it meets the comprehensive standard for faculty qualifications.

Adequacy of faculty is further defined in the SACS resource manual²:

Adequacy of faculty resources is necessary to ensure the quality and the integrity of an institution's academic programs. Moreover, the mission of the institution will govern the type of faculty employed, including the number of full-time faculty members. The achievement of the institution's mission with respect to teaching, research and /or service will require a critical mass of permanent, full-time, and qualified faculty to provide direction and oversight of academic programs. The number of such faculty will need to be sufficient to fulfill basic faculty functions of curriculum design, development, and evaluation; teaching; identification and assessment of appropriate student learning outcomes; student advising; research and creative activity; and institutional and professional service. The work of the core faculty may be supplemented and enhanced by judicious assignment of part-time faculty and graduate teaching assistants whose qualifications broaden and enrich the curriculum, increase learning opportunities for students, and enhance the mission of the institution.

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to articulate UCF's internal guidelines for assuring the number of full-time faculty members is adequate to support the university's mission, particularly its teaching mission. Consistent with good practice and to assure compliance with SACSCOC Core

¹ Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges. *Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement*. 2012 edition, p. 20

² Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges. *Resource Manual for the Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement*. 2012 edition, p. 24

Requirement 2.8, the university monitors the percent of student credit hours (SCHs) delivered by full-time faculty members in each of its academic programs/disciplines, at each location, and by delivery modality. SACSCOC does not prescribe specific targets for full-time faculty member instruction but based upon the results of previous reviews, the following UCF guidelines were developed.

Early Warning System Guidelines

Based upon good practices in higher education, UCF has established an early warning system for monitoring the sufficiency of full-time faculty members for each program/discipline, at each location, and by distance learning modalities. Specifically, academic affairs periodically reviews, the percent of SCHs taught by full-time faculty members

- at each location **where ≥ 25 percent of the program/discipline** is offered via face-to-face instruction **over a rolling three year period** and
- when **≥ 25 percent of the program/discipline** is offered via distance learning modality **over a rolling three year period**

Under the conditions described above, any program/discipline with less than 70 percent instruction (SCHs) taught by full-time faculty members at any location or by distance learning modality is flagged for closer review. Student success indicators and practices at peer institutions indicate that a 70 percent threshold provides sufficient opportunity to assess the impact of part-time instruction on the quality and integrity of the academic program/discipline and to take corrective action if deemed necessary.

Definition of full-time faculty members: Full-time faculty members are defined for this purpose as instructors of record who occupy standard full-time positions and are assigned to a faculty pay plan. These include full-time ranked faculty members (professors, associate professors, assistant professors, instructors, lecturers) but can also include personnel in other types of full-time faculty positions who generate student credit hours (e.g., faculty research associates in research centers). Personnel who previously met the full-time faculty member criteria and continue to serve as instructors of record are also counted as full-time faculty members (e.g., full-time faculty retirees who continue teaching). All other instructors of record are counted in the part-time category (e.g., adjuncts, graduate teaching associates).

Exceptions: Qualified part-time faculty members are important contributors to the quality and integrity of academic programs. They supplement and enhance the work of the core full-time faculty members in important ways that sometimes requires exceeding the guideline for a maximum of 30 percent part-time instruction. It *may* be appropriate to exceed 30 percent part-time instruction in the following scenarios:

- temporary use of part-time faculty members due to program growth or personnel issues (e.g., full-time faculty member on sabbatical, last-minute loss of full-time faculty member)
- program quality is enhanced in a way that would not be possible without a higher number of part-time faculty personnel (e.g., adjuncts who are practitioners in the field or hold other professional expertise in the area)
- other limited circumstances as determined by academic affairs on a case-by-case basis

Procedure:

1. The Office of Institutional Knowledge Management (IKM) provides a report of SCHs generated by faculty type (full-time and part-time) to academic affairs. Data are disaggregated by program/discipline, level (undergraduate and graduate), location, and modality.
2. Academic affairs reviews the reports and flags cases with less than 70 percent instruction delivered by full-time faculty members as follows:
 - if 25-49 percent of the program/discipline is offered at the location or via distance modality, the program/discipline is flagged as an area to **“watch”**
 - if ≥ 50 percent of the program program/discipline is offered at the location or via distance modality, the program/discipline is flagged for the dean to provide an explanation for the ratio of instruction taught by part-time faculty members
3. After applying the conditions described above, academic affairs disseminates the lists of programs falling below defined thresholds to the college deans. The deans subsequently provide an explanation for cases with less than 70 percent instruction delivered by full-time faculty members.
4. The provost or provost’s representative reviews the IKM reports and the deans’ explanations and determines whether the rationale provided warrants the use of part-time faculty members for greater than 30 percent instruction and whether the quality and integrity of affected programs/disciplines is threatened.
5. In cases where the quality and integrity of a particular program/discipline is believed to be in jeopardy, the dean will submit a corrective action plan to academic affairs for approval and monitoring by academic affairs.

Note: Approval of explanations for less than 70 percent instruction by full-time faculty members does not release the program/discipline from compliance with other SACSCOC standards, including Comprehensive Standard 3.5.4 (terminal degrees of faculty), requiring 25 percent of course hours in each undergraduate major be taught by faculty members holding an appropriate terminal degree.

Further, SACSCOC Comprehensive Standard 3.7.1 (faculty competence) is correlative to Comprehensive Standard 2.8. In this regard, the *UCF Minimum Faculty Teaching Qualifications Guidelines* should inform *all* instructional assignments (see <http://facultyaffairs.ucf.edu/docs/UCFFacQualsGuidelines.pdf>). A separate academic affairs review process monitors compliance with CS 3.7.1.