GRADUATE COUNCIL (GC)

Non-Academic Senate Faculty Eligibility to Teach Graduate Courses

Revised on November 27, 2018
Previous Revisions: May 1, 2018
Approved on March 18, 2015

Teaching graduate courses is a privilege reserved for Academic Senate faculty (i.e., ladder rank faculty, Lecturers with Security of Employment, Lecturers with Potential Security of Employment) and granted only to others by exception. Authority to grant exceptions is delegated to the Graduate Dean by Graduate Council based on the merits of each case presented by the graduate group involved.

The review process described here applies to any non-Academic Senate faculty nominated to teach a course numbered 200 or higher, regardless of the content of the course and without regard to whether the graduate course is to be taught concurrently as an undergraduate course. This policy applies to all graduate courses at UC Merced.

The Graduate Dean reviews the following academic appointment titles when a request is made by graduate group chairs for approval to teach graduate courses:

- Unit 18 Lecturers
- Adjunct faculty of any rank
- Visiting faculty (other than UC faculty) of any rank
- Postdoctoral Scholars

Requests for exceptions involving non-Academic Senate faculty require:

1. Completion of the form titled Request for the Approval of Graduate Instruction.
2. Current curriculum vitae for the nominee inclusive of recent publication record.
3. A memo of justification from the graduate group chair that explains the graduate group's need, data describing the group's history of appointing non-Senate instructors for the last three years, and the merits of the nominee's credentials to teach the course(s) in question (see below).
4. Course evaluations in cases where the nominee has previously taught at UC Merced and renewal of teaching privileges is being sought.

In the memo of justification for the request, the unit chair must address each of the following:

- The staffing context in which the request is being made. Specifically, the request must address the sufficiency or insufficiency of the number of Academic Senate faculty available to deliver the graduate course and if the course for which the exception is being requested is a core (required) course of the curriculum or an elective.
- Report the number of graduate courses taught by non-Senate faculty over the last three years as a fraction of the total graduate courses offered in the program. More than 10% (exclusive of

research credit) of courses taught by non-Senate faculty in academic (non-Professional) graduate programs requires Graduate Council review and approval.

- The teaching, research, and publication strengths of the nominee relative to the course in question. An explanation of such qualifications should be written for a non-specialist in the field.
- The prior experience of the nominee in teaching graduate students and/or undergraduates.
- Any professional background and experience the nominee may have as a practitioner that may be relevant to the course in question.

The period of approval granted by the Graduate Dean is dependent on the merits and individual's qualifications presented in each case. An appointment can be made for a maximum of three years, renewable. Requests involving the first-time appointment of a lecturer, who has not previously been approved for graduate instruction, will normally be approved for one year only unless the person's credentials are outstanding.

The Graduate Council requires that individuals nominated to teach a graduate course hold a terminal degree-e.g., a Ph.D., Ed.D., or M.F.A.-appropriate to the course(s) in question. It is important that someone who is to be entrusted to teach graduate students actually have experienced the rigors of conducting extensive research, published the results of that research, and finished the dissertation or other work required for a terminal degree. Only in rare cases will an individual who lacks a terminal degree in the relevant discipline be allowed to teach a graduate course.

Graduate Groups are asked to submit non-Academic Senate faculty requests as far in advance of the semester of proposed appointment as possible, and allow at least four weeks for review. Last-minute requests may not be approved unless the graduate group shows acceptable cause why the appointment request could not be made on time. If a new appointment is to be made the graduate group should allow sufficient time to meet the appropriate HR hiring requirements.

Postdoctoral Scholars Teaching Graduate Students

Graduate Council appreciates the value of providing post-doctoral scholars with a learning opportunity, as well as the value to the program of their sharing specialized knowledge with graduate students. In order to maintain program quality and consistency, post-doctoral scholars are best utilized in elective courses in which they have specialized knowledge, rather than in core courses of the curriculum. Requests for a post-doctoral scholar to teach core graduate courses shall be submitted to the Graduate Dean, and will be approved only in exceptional circumstances.