3.4.11 Qualified Academic Coordinators

3.4.11 For each major in a degree program, the institution assigns responsibility for program coordination, as well as curriculum development and review, to persons academically qualified in the field. In those degree programs for which the institution does not identify a major, the requirement applies to a curricular area or concentration.

Judgment of Compliance

In Compliance

Narrative of Compliance

The University of Alabama assigns responsibility for program coordination, as well as curriculum development and review, to persons academically qualified in the field.

The primary responsibility for the content, quality, and effectiveness of the curriculum at UA rests with the faculty. An excellent summary of how the curriculum development and review process occurs at UA is presented in the Compliance Narrative for 4.1 appearing later in this Report. It provides an overview of the curriculum approval process and describes the roles of faculty, chairs, deans, and the provost.

Most often, proposals for programs or for changes in programs must be approved by department-level faculty committees or the department faculty as a whole before being reviewed and approved by respective department chairs and deans. Program coordinators are generally responsible for leading the faculty through the process of developing and reviewing program requirements. The colleges and schools have considerable discretion in assigning additional specific duties and responsibilities to the program coordinator. In some cases, the program coordinator is responsible for actually administering the academic program on behalf of the faculty. These responsibilities might include scheduling courses, coordinating admissions and orientation activities, coordinating advising, supervising graduate teaching assistants, etc. Even with this potential variation in duties and responsibilities of the program coordinator, the fundamental principle of faculty governance of the development of curriculum change within academic programs is preserved.

The general expectation is that program coordinators will hold the terminal degree in the field of the degree program, including off-campus and online delivery options. Where appropriate, such as in applied fields, professional experience may also be considered to strengthen the qualifications of the individual for the position, inasmuch as a combination of academic qualifications and work experience may provide greater knowledge and expertise than a terminal degree alone. At The University of Alabama, there are over 140 program coordinators, and only three of the on-campus coordinators do not hold a terminal degree, two of whom coordinate BA/BS programs and hold the masters degree in the field. The third possesses extraordinary relevant experiences qualifying him for the program coordinator position. There are also only a few program coordinators who hold the terminal degree in a closely related field. These cases will also be clearly identified and justification will be provided affirming these individuals to be exceptionally well-qualified, by virtue of their experience and professional contributions to the field in question.

Summary tables disaggregated to the college level provide pertinent information related to the Qualifications of Program Coordinators. Within each table, the degree program title and level is presented. The name of the program coordinator is provided including his highest earned degree and other appropriate graduate degrees. When appropriate, additional statements of clarification or justification are provided. Curriculum vitae for all program coordinators are linked to the program coordinator’s name should one wish to view qualifications in greater detail.
The University of Alabama also offers 36 degree programs and 3 certificates at locations off-campus and/or through electronic means. Summary tables of the Qualifications of Program Coordinators for Off-campus or Electronically Delivered Programs are organized the same as the previous college-level summary tables (e.g., Degree Name, Degree level, Coordinators Name actively linked to his CV, Highest Earned Degree and Clarification/Justification when appropriate). These off-campus and electronically delivered degree programs are coordinated by 26 faculty members, 23 of whom have terminal degrees. Only 9 of the off-campus and/or electronically delivered programs are coordinated by a faculty member different from the individual responsible for coordinating the on-campus portion of the program.

Two other important administrative processes at UA address relevant faculty qualifications:

1. the on-line hiring system used when employing new faculty ensures that prospective faculty members’ academic qualifications meet discipline-specific standards, and
2. faculty who are employed to teach graduate-level classes must meet the criteria for graduate faculty status. Full and associate graduate faculty members are appointed for six-year renewable terms. Temporary graduate faculty status is awarded for a three-year maximum term. Graduate-level program coordinators are chosen from the eligible faculty by department heads and deans.

Support Documentation

Qualifications of Program Coordinators by College

- Arts & Sciences
- Commerce & Business Administration
- Communication & Information Science
- Education
- Engineering
- The Graduate School
- Human Environmental Sciences
- Law
- Nursing
- Social Work

Qualifications of Program Coordinators for Off-campus or Electronically Delivered Programs

- Commerce & Business Administration
- Communication & Information Science
- Education
- Engineering
- Human Environmental Sciences
- Law
- Nursing
- Social Work