3.5.4 Terminal degrees of faculty

3.5.4 At least 25% of the course hours in each major at the baccalaureate level are taught by faculty members holding an appropriate terminal degree, usually the earned doctorate, or the equivalent of the terminal degree.

Judgment of Compliance

In Compliance

Narrative

More than 25% of the baccalaureate-level credit hours delivered by each department offering one or more bachelor’s degrees at The University of Alabama (UA) are taught by an instructor of record holding a terminal degree. The University meets this standard in both on-campus and distance instructional delivery. The University does not offer any off-campus undergraduate degree programs.

An analysis by the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (OIRA) shows that across the University, faculty holding a terminal degree deliver 72% of all undergraduate credit hours. The University meets this standard in both on-campus and distance instructional delivery: terminally degreed faculty provide 71% of the on-campus and 75% of the distance undergraduate credit hours. Among upper-level courses designed primarily for majors (300 and 400-level courses) in disciplines that award undergraduate degrees: 75% of all credit hours, 75% of on-campus credit hours, and 79% of distance credit hours are delivered by faculty with a terminal degree.

In eight departments, terminally degreed faculty taught all of the on-campus credit hours. Two departments taught fewer than 40% of their on-campus credit hours with terminally-degreed faculty: Accounting (38%) and Health Science (37%). In both of these departments, faculty with a terminal degree delivered at least 57% of the upper-level, on-campus credit hours. Among departments with distance learning programs, one taught all of their credit hours with terminally-degreed faculty (Mechanical Engineering) and none provided less than 60% of their distance credit hours with terminally degreed faculty.

This analysis uses undergraduate credit hours for courses taught during the 2013–14 academic year (fall 2013 and spring 2014) by departments offering undergraduate degrees. Credit hours earned by students taking courses for the University core (general education requirements), Freshmen Learning Community courses (Freshmen Compass courses, 101 courses usually directed at study skills and acclimation to university life or introductions to majors or professions), and basic physical education (BPE) courses were excluded. The analysis computes the percentage of credit hours delivered by instructors of record whose highest degree was a terminal degree. In addition to doctoral degrees, including the JD and MD, the University considers the following master’s degrees to be terminal degrees.

- Master of Fine Arts (M.F.A.)
- Master of Laws (L.L.M.)
- Master of Library and Information Science (M.L.I.S.)
- Master of Library and Information Studies (M.L.I.St.)
- Master of Library Science (M.L.S.)
- Master of Music (M.M.)
- Master of Public Health (MPH)
- Master of Science in Human Environmental Sciences (M.S.H.E.S.)
- Master of Social Work (MSW)

---

Supporting Documents

1. Faculty Credentials Data Analysis (PDF)