

Graduate Teaching Certification Standards (Revised April 2025)

According to the ODU *Faculty Handbook*, “Faculty are to be certified for graduate instruction in their field of specialization based on the appropriate college’s published criteria of required scholarly and/or professional accomplishments, satisfactory teaching performance at the advanced level in appropriate disciplines, and necessary terminal graduate degrees.”

The following criteria for certification should be considered minimal; it is expected that most applicants shall exceed them.

Definitions

“The College” refers to the entire faculty of the College of Arts and Letters, as represented by colleagues who serve on the Graduate Studies Committee.

A “five-year” period of certification refers to five consecutive three-semester (i.e. fall, spring and summer) academic years. The period of certification expires at the end of five years and *before* the start of five-year anniversary semester. For example, certification granted in fall semester 2015 expires in summer 2020, not fall 2020.

A “reputable press” refers to one that is appropriately cataloged, indexed, and distributed in the specified field or fields of research. The College recognizes that open access journals have flourished in many fields of research, providing scholars with quicker times to publication than print journals and readers with lower-cost access to current scholarship. Nevertheless, the rise of so-called “predatory publishers” requires differentiating between publications that subject scholarship to critical evaluation, and those that do not. Indicators of a reputable press include (but are not limited to):

- the press’s clear articulation of its scope, target readership, peer review procedures, and rejection rates;
- an editorial board and list of referees consisting of recognized experts in the field;
- membership in the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE), Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) and/or the Open Access Scholarly Publishers Association (OASPA); and
- a documented impact factor calculated by Thomson Reuters

Potential indicators of a questionable journal include the requirement for a substantial author subvention (“article processing charges”) for publication; a lack of transparency in peer review; and a prior history of questionable or fraudulent publication.

Finally, the Committee recommends that faculty consult their Department’s Statement for Evaluation of Scholarly Activity and Research for guidance concerning the types of journals and presses that constitute reputable venues for scholarship.

The certification standards are as follows:

I. Level I Certification

According to the *Faculty Handbook*, “Faculty certified at Level I are eligible to participate in all levels of graduate education, including chairing and serving on doctoral dissertation committees and master’s thesis committees.”

Candidates for Level I certification must have the terminal degree and, in addition, must meet one of the following criteria. The emphasis in each of the criteria is on both quantity and quality of scholarship as indicated through peer or professional validation:

1. Publications: During the previous five years, a faculty member must have at least three articles in refereed journals and/or refereed book chapters, or one scholarly book published by a reputable press. Up to three research reports for grants of which the faculty member was the principal investigator may be substituted for up to three refereed journals and/or refereed book chapters or for a scholarly book. The Committee will consider one edited book as meeting this standard in part or in full, if the faculty member provides evidence that the his or her contribution is the equivalent of up to three refereed articles. For Level I certification, a faculty member may not substitute presentations of papers or participation in academic conferences for publications.

In situations where the faculty member exerts editorial control over or input into the publication in question, he or she must provide evidence to the Committee that a double-blind peer review process evaluated the publication.

Generally, the Committee considers the editing of academic journals to fall under the category of service rather than scholarship. In cases where the faculty member wrote original scholarly content, the Committee may consider this as counting toward meeting publication certification standards on a case-by-case basis.

2. Commissions and Exhibitions: In studio art, a faculty member must have at least three private or public commissions, or three juried or invitational exhibitions at the state, regional, national, or international level during the past five years.

3. Performances: In music or theatre arts, a faculty member must have at least three state, regional, national, or international reviewed performances during the past five years.

4. Creative Writing: During the previous five years, a faculty member must have at least three essays, three short stories, twenty pages of poetry, one book, one novel, one full-length play, or one screenplay published by a reputable press or journal. Creative works that are optioned or are produced at the state, regional, national, or international levels may be considered a form of publication.

5. Grants:

A grant or fellowship received from an external grant-giving agency via a typical competitive review process may be substituted for one article, performance, short story, etc. Only one grant can be used per certification period, and only when the faculty member is a principal investigator or co-principal investigator on the grant. Faculty who avail

themselves of this substitution must meet the requirements under sections 1–4 (without the benefit of this substitution) in the subsequent five-year certification period.

II. Level II Certification

According to the *Faculty Handbook*, “Faculty certified at Level II are eligible to participate in selected levels of graduate teaching as defined by the college in which they are appointed. They may not chair doctoral dissertation or master’s thesis committees, although they may serve on these committees.” Faculty in the College of Arts and Letters certified at Level II may teach courses at the master’s level. Additionally, department chairs may request to the Graduate Studies Committee that these faculty members be approved to teach specific courses at the doctoral level based on their particular expertise; such requests must be accompanied by a letter of justification, and can be made at the time that the faculty member is being certified or subsequently.

Candidates for Level II certification must have the terminal degree and, in addition, must meet one of the following criteria. The emphasis in each of the criteria is on both quantity and quality of scholarship as indicated through peer or professional validation::

1. Publications: During the previous five years, the faculty member must have produced at least two articles in refereed journals (print or on-line). The Committee will consider publications comparable to refereed journal articles, such as book chapters in anthologies published by reputable presses, if the faculty member provides evidence of scholarly review through editorial assessment or similar peer evaluations. The Committee will consider one edited book as sufficiently meeting this standard if the faculty member provides evidence that his or her contribution is equivalent to two refereed articles.

In situations where the faculty member exerts editorial control over the publication in question, the faculty member must provide evidence to the committee that the publication was subjected to a double-blind peer review process.

The editing of academic journals is generally considered to fall under the category of service, but in instances where the editor wrote original scholarly content, this may be considered as counting toward meeting publication standards for Level II certification on a case-by-case basis.

2. Presentations: During the previous five years, the faculty member will have made at least four different presentations at international or national association meetings if they had no publications in that period. One regional conference presentation may be substituted for a national or international presentation if significant participation comes from beyond the region. Presentations made at national or international conferences may include either a faculty member’s research or comments made as part of a conference panel in which the faculty member serves as the invited panel commentator/respondent. At most one of the four presentations may be a commentary/response. In his or her application for certification, the faculty member must demonstrate that they are engaged in ongoing research intended for publication. Faculty who satisfy certification requirements under this standard must meet the requirements under section II.1 in the subsequent five-year certification period.

3. Publications/Presentations: If one article or comparable publication has been published during the previous five years, then the faculty member may substitute at least two presentations at international or national conferences for a second publication. One regional

conference presentation may be substituted for a national or international presentation if significant participation comes from beyond the region. Faculty who satisfy certification requirements under this standard must meet the requirements under section II.1 in the subsequent five-year certification period.

4. Commissions and Exhibitions: In studio art, a faculty member must have at least two private or public commissions or two juried or invitational exhibitions at the state, regional, national, or international level during the past five years.

5. Performances: In music or theatre arts, a faculty member must have at least two state, regional, national, or international reviewed performances during the past five years.

In any of the performing arts, a committee of peers made up of one external evaluator and two members of the Old Dominion University faculty, may be appointed by the departmental chair to evaluate the work or performance level of the candidate when published reviews are unavailable. In such cases, the written evaluation of the committee shall be submitted with the recommendation of the chair of the Arts and Letters Graduate Studies Committee.

7. Creative Writing: In creative writing and related fields, a faculty member must have at least two essays, two short stories, fifteen pages of poetry, one book, one novel, one play, or one screenplay published by a reputable press or journal during the past five years. Creative works that are optioned or are produced at the state, regional, national, or international levels may be considered a form of publication.

8. Grants: A grant or fellowship received from an external grant-giving agency via a typical competitive review process may be substituted for one article, performance, short story, etc. An intramural Summer Research Fellowship may substitute for one conference presentation. Only one grant can be used per certification period, and only when the faculty member is a principal investigator or co-principal investigator on the grant. Faculty who avail themselves of this substitution must meet the requirements under sections 1 or 4–7 in the subsequent five-year certification period.

III. Level III Certification

According to the *Faculty Handbook*,

Level III certification recognizes faculty who possess a terminal degree but who, in lieu of measurable research activity, possess advanced professional expertise in a particular field. Faculty certified at Level III are eligible to teach specific graduate-level courses germane to their professional expertise. They may not chair doctoral dissertation committees or master's thesis committees, although if their particular expertise warrants this they may serve on these committees with the approval of the department/school graduate committee, the college graduate committee, the dean or designee, and the provost or designee.

IV. Provisional Certification

In specific circumstances faculty members with terminal degrees who do not meet the usual standards for graduate certification may receive provisional certification.

Faculty with Recent Terminal Degrees: A new faculty member who has held a terminal degree for fewer than four years will receive Level I certification. This provisional certification will last for five years from the date of hire, and is not renewable. Because this certification does not require an evaluation of the candidate's scholarship or creativity, faculty seeking provisional certification will receive "fast-track" consideration: upon receipt of the Graduate Teaching Certification Form and the Associate Dean's verification of the applicant's terminal degree, the Chair of the Graduate Studies Committee will sign the Certification Form and forward it to the Dean for final approval. Faculty seeking fast-track approval should submit their certification materials no later than the end of the first month of hire or return to teaching and research.

Faculty with Full-Time Administrative Appointments: Full-time administrators with tenured faculty positions will be provisionally certified at an appropriate level while holding full-time administrative positions and for three years after returning to the faculty. Because this certification does not require an evaluation of the candidate's scholarship or creativity, administrators seeking provisional certification will receive fast-track consideration. For the purposes this proviso, no faculty member eligible to serve on the Faculty Senate will be considered a full-time administrator.

Exceptional Circumstances: In rare and exceptional instances, faculty members who are not in full-time administrative positions may receive provisional certification when medical issues or other extenuating circumstances have significantly impaired their ability to engage in scholarly or creative activity. Appropriate documentation must be presented to the appropriate campus office or to the Graduate Studies Committee directly. Cases arising under this provision are not eligible for fast-track consideration.

V. Exceptional Credentials Graduate Certification

In exceptional cases the College may certify faculty who do not satisfy the normal requirements, e.g., who do not possess a terminal degree, for graduate instruction. According to the Faculty Handbook, this is possible "only in extraordinary circumstances" and requires "the approval of the appropriate department/school committee, the college graduate committee, the dean or designee, and the provost or designee." Faculty seeking graduate certification under this provision must provide a portfolio documenting their professional and/or academic credentials, including a letter from the department chair and/or graduate program director explaining the nature of the extraordinary circumstances. The Graduate Studies Committee reserves the right to request further documentation as it deems necessary. Faculty without a terminal degree shall not be certified at Level I.

VI. Certification of Outside Readers for Dissertation and Thesis Committees

The Committee may certify faculty and scholars from outside the College to serve on doctoral dissertation and Master's thesis committees ("outside readers").

If the proposed outside reader has an academic position in another college at the University, the Committee will accept the certification of their home college as equivalent to Arts and Letters certification.

If the proposed outside reader has an academic position at another college or university, the Committee will accept that institution's graduate instruction certification as equivalent to and satisfying Arts and Letters certification.

If the proposed outside reader is from an institution other than a college or university, the Committee will certify the reader for graduate instruction if they possesses a terminal degree in the field of specialization as defined by the discipline and meets the college criteria for Level I, II, or III certification.

Certification under this standard is on a per-student basis. An outside reader who serves on more than one committee concurrently requires only one certification; a reader who serves on several committees sequentially requires recertification for each student. Graduate certification under this standard expires when the doctoral candidate or Master's student successfully defends their dissertation or thesis, or terminates their course of study.

Proposed outside readers in faculty positions who clearly meet the standards above may receive fast-track consideration: upon receipt of the Graduate Teaching Certification Form and the Associate Dean's verification of the applicant's graduate certification status the Chair of the Graduate Studies Committee may approve the certification and forward the Certification Form to the Dean (or designee) for final approval. Cases where there is some question about whether the appropriate standard has been met should be sent to the full committee for review, as should cases involving proposed outside readers who do not hold faculty appointments.

Appeals Process for a Graduate Certification Decision

If the faculty member disagrees with the committee's decision, they may appeal the decision directly to the dean of the College. To initiate the process, the faculty member must resubmit all certification materials, along with a decision within one month of the appeal. The dean's decision is final.

Materials to be submitted when seeking Graduate Certification

1. The College form (available from the College website).
2. A current curriculum vitae
3. An optional letter from the candidate explaining how his or her work satisfies the criteria for certification, when this is not obvious, and/or describing his or her participation in graduate education during the past five years.
4. An optional statement of support from the department chair or director in the candidate's department or program.
5. Copies of publications, other research or creative work and/or conference programs and papers presented during the previous five years.

Submit only materials necessary to meet the minimum requirements. Materials will be returned promptly after the certification decision is made.