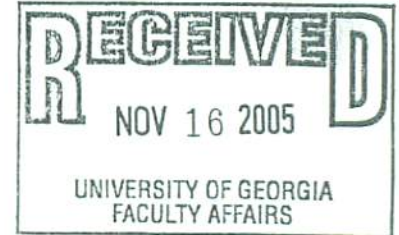




# The University of Georgia

Office of the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost



## MEMORANDUM

November 16, 2005

TO: Prof. Jere Morehead  
Vice Provost for Academic Affairs

Dr. Jayne Smith  
Director of Faculty Affairs

FROM: Prof. Bob Boehmer  
Associate Provost for Institutional Effectiveness

Dr. Sue D. Achtemeier *Sue*  
Director for Planning and Accreditation

SUBJECT: Documentation of Credentials of Foreign-educated Faculty

### Scope of Memo

You asked our advice regarding documenting (for SACS purposes) that foreign-educated faculty are appropriately qualified to teach the courses to which they are assigned. According to IR data these represent about 5.8% of UGA's professorial faculty. This memo summarizes our response to your inquiry.

### Requirements

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) specifies qualification standards that apply to all faculty. (See attached Comprehensive Standards section 3.7) The highest degree is the usual credential and the transcript the usual evidence for that degree.

## Responsibility

Basic responsibility for assuring compliance with these Comprehensive Standards lies with the **academic unit offering the course**. This assurance must be **timely**, i.e. prior to the individual's entering the classroom, and **ongoing**, assuring compliance for each separate course taught. It is the dean's responsibility to assure that these standards are met.

The UGA Office of International Education is directly involved only with individuals holding an H-1 visa, however they affirm that the following is their best advice for **documenting any foreign credentials**:

- If a transcript is available for a degree from a foreign institution and the department head cannot determine the equivalency, the transcript should ordinarily be evaluated to show the equivalency to a U.S. degree. The recommended organization for doing that evaluation is Lisano International, a highly respected firm, very knowledgeable about international education with over 30 years experience. A link to a form requesting that evaluation is available at <http://www.uga.edu/oie/forms.htm>. Also attached is a sample letter for requesting credential evaluation.
- If a transcript is not available, the Office of International Education recommends that the hiring department use the services of an external evaluation agency. UGA uses Lisano International and Foreign Credential Evaluations (see attachment) to evaluate foreign credentials. The Office of International Education recommends Lisano International because of their extensive knowledge of international education.
- The documentation should be forwarded to the Office of Faculty Affairs for appropriate approval prior to a person's beginning to teach.

Some of our peer institutions use these common practices:

- The University of Missouri: for scholars on work visas (H-1) who obtain their degrees from foreign institutions the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services requires that the employer verify that the scholar's degree is equivalent to a U.S. degree when petitioning/applying for a H-1 work authorization.
- The University of Virginia uses four guidelines including a Preliminary Approval Form, the candidate's curriculum vitae, three letters of reference, and an H-1B visa request and all relevant documentation.
- Virginia Tech requires copies of diplomas or transcripts stating "Diploma Conferred" and a Credentials Evaluation if the credentials are foreign. A letter from a prominent

prominent member of the department staff is satisfactory as a Credentials Evaluation in most cases.

### **Significance**

Credentials required of all teaching faculty are the most prescriptive part of the SACS *Principles*, which dictate the terms of our institution's accreditation. A potential result of failure to comply with these comprehensive standards is loss of the UGA's accredited status.

Please feel free to contact us if you require further information.

## **SACS Comprehensive Standards (from *Principles of Accreditation*): Subsection related to Faculty**

### **3.7 Faculty**

3.7.1 The institution employs competent faculty members qualified to accomplish the mission and goals of the institution. When determining acceptable qualifications of its faculty, an institution gives primary consideration to the highest earned degree in the discipline in accordance with the guidelines listed below. The institution also considers competence, effectiveness, and capacity, including, as appropriate, undergraduate and graduate degrees, related work experiences in the field, professional licensure and certifications, honors and awards, continuous documented excellence in teaching, or other demonstrated competencies and achievements that contribute to effective teaching and student learning outcomes. For all cases, the institution is responsible for justifying and documenting the qualifications of its faculty.

#### *Credential Guidelines:*

*a. Faculty teaching general education courses at the undergraduate level: doctor's or master's degree in the teaching discipline or master's degree with a concentration in the teaching discipline (a minimum of 18 graduate semester hours in the teaching discipline).*

*b. Faculty teaching associate degree courses designed for transfer to a baccalaureate degree: doctor's or master's degree in the teaching discipline or master's degree with a concentration in the teaching discipline (a minimum of 18 graduate semester hours in the teaching discipline).*

*c. Faculty teaching associate degree courses not designed for transfer to the baccalaureate degree: bachelor's degree in the teaching discipline, or associate's degree and demonstrated competencies in the teaching discipline.*

*d. Faculty teaching baccalaureate courses: doctor's or master's degree in the teaching discipline or master's degree with a concentration in the teaching discipline (minimum of 18 graduate semester hours in the teaching discipline). At least 25 percent of the discipline course hours in each undergraduate major are taught by faculty members holding the terminal degree—usually the earned doctorate—in the discipline.*

*e. Faculty teaching graduate and post-baccalaureate course work: earned doctorate/ terminal degree in the teaching discipline or a related discipline.*

*f. Graduate teaching assistants: master's in the teaching discipline or 18 graduate semester hours in the teaching discipline, direct supervision by a faculty member experienced in the teaching discipline, regular in-service training, and planned and periodic evaluations.*

3.7.2 The institution regularly evaluates the effectiveness of each faculty member in accord with published criteria, regardless of contractual or tenured status.

3.7.3 The institution provides evidence of ongoing professional development of faculty as teachers, scholars, and practitioners.

3.7.4 The institution ensures adequate procedures for safeguarding and protecting academic freedom.

3.7.5 The institution publishes policies on the responsibility and authority of faculty in academic and governance matters.

### Agencies That Provide Credential Evaluations

Agency	Information
<p>Lisano International (<a href="http://www.lisano-intl.com/">http://www.lisano-intl.com/</a>)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LISANO INTERNATIONAL (LI) is a highly qualified educational consulting service which prepares professional evaluation reports on foreign educational credentials and establishes their comparability to U. S. high school diplomas and college/university degrees. Additionally, academic course work completed is converted to U. S. grade and semester credit hour equivalents relative to possible transfer credit or advanced standing considerations. LI's reports and services are provided to junior/senior colleges, universities, professional schools, immigration attorneys, employers, licensing and certification boards, the armed services, as well as the United States Immigration and Naturalization Service.</li> <li>• LI evaluations and reports are prepared solely by an eminently qualified evaluator who has many years of university-level and private consulting service experience in international educational credential evaluations for purposes of F-1 and J-1 Visa admissions, advanced standing, and transfer credit; H-1B Visa and Permanent Residency applications; and other special needs. Additionally, the doctorally-trained evaluator is an active member of many state, regional, and national professional organizations concerned with foreign educational credential evaluation, international student issues, admissions, and educational placement. Only the best and most current reference materials, information, and resources available to U. S. comparative educators and credential evaluators are used in all LI assessments.</li> <li>• LI evaluations closely follow the credential evaluation methodology, admission guidelines, and placement recommendations suggested by the National Council on the Evaluation of Foreign Education Credentials (a.k.a. "The Council") as published by the National Association of Foreign Student Affairs: Association of International Educators (NAFSA:AIE); the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admission Officers (AACRAO); and other professional books, documents, and articles written by prominent specialists in international education.</li> <li>• LI continuously aspires to the highest standards possible related to accuracy, academic fairness, and promptness in its preparation of reports on the comparative value of</li> </ul>

<p>Foreign Credential Evaluations (<a href="http://www.fceatlanta.com/">http://www.fceatlanta.com/</a>)</p>	<p>educational achievements in countries outside of the U.S.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FOREIGN CREDENTIAL EVALUATIONS, INC. (FCE) evaluates credentials received from educational institutions abroad (e.g. <i>Licenciado, Maitrise, Diplom</i>) and compares them to degrees from educational institutions in the United States (e.g. Bachelor, Master, Doctor of Philosophy, Doctor of Medicine).</li> <li>• Credentials are evaluated for law firms, universities, and employers on behalf of individuals applying for nonimmigrant visas or placement in educational institutions. Credentials are also evaluated at the request of individuals for the same purposes.</li> <li>• Since 1981 evaluations prepared by FCE have been accepted as authoritative by the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, U.S. and Georgia Departments of Labor, Georgia State Department of Education, and institutions of higher education in Georgia and other states.</li> <li>• The evaluations of foreign education credentials by FCE represent the professional judgment of the evaluators who determine the equivalency of the credentials to those offered by educational institutions in the U.S.</li> </ul>
<p>Education International, Inc. (<a href="http://www.educationinternational.org/">http://www.educationinternational.org/</a>)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education International provides fast, expert, personal service for the evaluation of educational credentials from other countries in terms of education at accredited institutions in the U.S. They do general evaluations that state the educational level(s) achieved, along with the specialization(s). They also provide general evaluations that include the approximate grade-point average (GPA). Education International does not do detailed, course-by-course evaluations, nor do they do evaluations for the C.P.A. examinations or translations.</li> </ul>
<p>Global Credential Evaluators, Inc. (<a href="http://www.gcevaluators.com">http://www.gcevaluators.com</a>)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GCE's primary services include a document-by-document report which meets the needs of those who require an evaluation of the level of education completed outside the U.S. in U.S. terms.</li> <li>• A course-by-course evaluation, with a grade point average, for those who require the international courses, credits and grades to be converted to U.S. credits and grades. This evaluation includes the document-by-document evaluation.</li> </ul>
<p>International Education Research Foundation, Inc. (<a href="http://www.ierf.org">http://www.ierf.org</a>)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The <i>Credentials Evaluation Service</i> provides assistance in interpreting the educational backgrounds of people who have studied outside the U.S. and who need statements of U.S. educational equivalencies. With over 30 years of experience and having processed over</li> </ul>

	<p>300,000 evaluations, IERF is the oldest and one of the most respected foreign credentials evaluation agencies in the U.S.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their services are used by colleges and universities, professional organizations, state licensing boards, U.S. government agencies, attorneys, and individuals.</li> </ul>
<p>The Knowledge Company (<a href="http://www.knowledgecompany.com">http://www.knowledgecompany.com</a>)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Knowledge Company provides thorough and authoritative educational credential evaluations of secondary, undergraduate and graduate programs that are consistently accepted by the INS. The Knowledge Company also evaluates professional certification and licensure for immigration purposes. We rely on the norms of the American university community, informed by country experts and original research.</li> <li>• In order for The Knowledge Company to make accurate judgments, it is essential to provide all relevant documentation. Documents required will vary from client to client. Whenever possible, provide transcripts or marks sheets as well as degrees or diplomas.</li> <li>• The following is a guideline of documentation to send for evaluation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Secondary: Proof of national or state secondary-level examination results and completion of secondary school</li> <li>• Undergraduate: A transcript listing all courses or examinations completed and grades and the degree or diploma or proof that it was conferred.</li> <li>• Graduate: A transcript listing all courses or examinations completed and grades and the degree or diploma or proof that it was conferred.</li> <li>• Professional: Documentation of licensure or certification examination results (bar, medicine, accounting, nursing, or other professional exam).</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p>Spantran Educational Services, Inc. (<a href="http://www.spantran-edu.com/">http://www.spantran-edu.com/</a>)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SpanTran analyzes international benchmark educational/professional credentials to determine U.S. comparability. These evaluations range from special purpose letters to simple degree equivalencies to thorough course analyses, grade conversions, and grade-point averages. <i>Benchmark</i> refers to documents which mark the completion of an established educational level required in order to proceed to the next level. These are generally defined as primary/elementary, secondary, post-secondary/undergraduate, and graduate. Vocational credentials must be credit-bearing toward secondary or post-secondary graduation (e.g., vocational high-school diploma, associate degree, bachelor's degree, comparable</li> </ul>

	<p>qualifications, etc.). Licenses which are the direct result of benchmark credentials will be included. Benchmark educational credentials exclude professional development/in-service training, extension/continuing/enrichment education, employment-related documents, progress statements, résumés, attestations of class rank or academic achievement, and so forth.</p>
<p>World Education Services (<a href="http://www.wes.org">http://www.wes.org</a>)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WES offers three types of evaluations</li> <li>• Document-by-Document Report: A Document-by-Document evaluation identifies and describes each diploma or certificate, indicates periods of education and provides an equivalency for each document. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This is the report you should order for: employment or immigration</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Comprehensive Course-by-Course Report: In addition to providing all of the information contains a Document-by-Document report, our Course-by-Course evaluation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lists all subjects completed at the post-secondary level</li> <li>• Provides a U.S. semester credit and grade equivalent for each course</li> <li>• Provides a U.S. grade point average (GPA) or a 4.0 scale, and</li> <li>• Designates the level (upper or lower) of each undergraduate course (for applicants who have selected education as their primary purpose)</li> <li>• This is the report you should order for: education (whether you seek to transfer credits of apply for an advanced degree), professional licensing, professional certification</li> </ul> </li> <li>• CPA Board Evaluation: For those applying for state Certified Public Accounting exams.</li> </ul>



## SAMPLE LETTER REQUESTING CREDENTIAL EVALUATION

To: Ms. Beth Cotter  
Foreign Credential Evaluations, Inc.  
1425 Market Boulevard  
Suite 330 – Box 305  
Roswell, Georgia 30076

From:

Re: (Name of Prospective Employee)

Date:

The University of Georgia plans to employ the above named individual in the H visa category. A credential evaluation will be required to accompany the application to the Immigration and Naturalization Service. I am attaching the following items to facilitate this evaluation:

Copy of degree certificates with related transcripts.  
Curriculum Vita.  
Check or money order in the amount of \$60.00USD payable to  
**Foreign Credential Evaluations, Inc.**

Once you have prepared the evaluation please forward it to:

Tammy Lyskowinski  
International Faculty and Staff Advisor  
The Office of International Education  
The University of Georgia  
209 Barrow Hall  
Athens, GA 30602-2407

Thank you for your kind assistance with this matter.