

6.1 Full-time faculty

The institution employs an adequate number of full-time faculty members to support the mission and goals of the institution.

Compliance Judgment: In Compliance

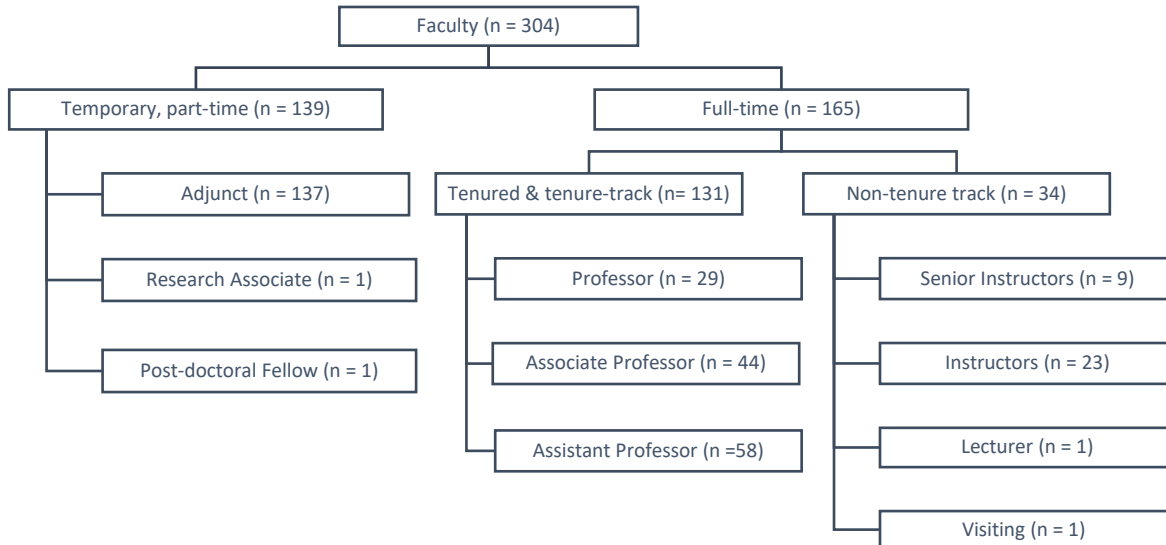
Rationale

Faculty Types, Ranks, and Number. As illustrated in Figure 6.1, there were 304 full-time or temporary, part-time faculty at the University of South Carolina Aiken in the 2019-20 academic year. Full-time faculty are comprised of tenured, tenure-track, and non-tenured members. The initial letter of appointment indicates the faculty member's academic rank, tenure or tenure-track status, and essential job duties. The types and titles of faculty are established by a [USC system policy](#).^[1] Tenured and tenure-track full-time members carry academic ranks of professor, associate professor, and assistant professor. Tenured and tenure-track full-time members are expected to hold a terminal degree in their discipline. Conditions for appointment and advancement in rank are presented in the [Faculty Manual](#).^[2] All full-time tenured and tenure-track faculty members, unless the terms and conditions of their appointment letter state otherwise, are expected to engage in [teaching](#),^[3] [student advisement](#),^[4] [scholarship](#),^[5] and [service](#).^[6]

Non-tenured, full-time members carry the rank of senior instructor, instructor, lecturer, or visiting professor. Each candidate for appointment at the rank of instructor is expected to have earned the master's degree and to offer evidence or promise of competence in teaching. An instructor who holds at least the master's degree and has held a full-time faculty appointment at USC Aiken for a minimum of six years may apply for promotion to Senior Instructor. [Duties of full-time non-tenure track instructors and senior instructors](#) ^[7] are focused in the areas of teaching and university service. Full-time visiting faculty, lecturers, and part-time adjuncts have teaching duties only. Temporary, part-time faculty are not eligible for tenure. A temporary faculty member may be appointed to one of the following ranks with the approval of the Executive Vice

Chancellor for Academic Affairs: adjunct, research associate, or post-doctoral fellow. Research associates and post-doctoral fellows principally have research duties but may also teach.

Figure 6.1 Number and Type of Faculty at USC Aiken in 2019-20



Proof of Adequacy of Full-time Faculty in Support of the Mission and Goals. By [policy](#),^[8] the University of South Carolina Aiken hires a highly qualified and diverse community of scholars who complement and contribute to the institution’s [mission](#).^[9] The University is committed to the hiring of full-time faculty who are dedicated to transformative teaching and who are engaged in high impact learning practices, excellent research and creative pursuits that involve mentoring and directing of students in such activities, and service provided to the University, professional bodies, and community. The number of full-time faculty has grown over the past several years; the University has had a complement of 123, 154, 159, and 165 for fiscal years 2017, 2018, 2019, and 2020, respectively.

Decisions to hire new full-time faculty are made based on several key indicators including reliance on part-time faculty; the average class size for lower level, upper division, and if appropriate, graduate classes in each discipline; the number of students pursuing majors; teaching loads; advising loads; research and service activities of faculty; and the requirements of professional accrediting bodies. Five-year trends in these data

are reviewed annually along with the activities of faculty that contribute to fulfillment of strategic objectives and goals specified in the [institution's strategic plan](#).^[10] Links to end-of-year reports for each academic unit are presented in Table 6.1-1. These reports are shared among members of Academic Council which consists of Academic Chairs, Deans, and the Provost. Based on deliberations and discussions by the Council, the Provosts prioritizes and makes recommendations to the Chancellor regarding new full-time faculty positions.

Table 6.1-1. End-of-year Reports of Academic Units (2015–2019)

Department of Biology & Geology ^[11]	Department of Mathematical Sciences & Engineering ^[18]
Department of Chemistry & Physics ^[12]	Department of Psychology ^[19]
Department of Communication ^[13]	Department of Sociology ^[20]
Department of English ^[14]	Department of Visual & Performing Arts ^[21]
Department of Exercise & Sports Science ^[15]	School of Business Administration ^[22]
Department of History, Political Science & Philosophy ^[16]	School of Education ^[23]
Department of Languages, Literatures & Cultures ^[17]	School of Nursing ^[24]

Adequacy of Full-time Faculty for Teaching. As a comprehensive, liberal arts institution, the principal focus of the university is teaching. A review of the reports in Table 6.1 show that USC Aiken has an adequate number of full-time faculty to support the teaching functions of the university. Tenured and tenure-track, full-time faculty accounted for 57% of the instructional credit in 2019-20, with another 19% accounted for by non-tenure track, full-time faculty. Only 24% of instructional credit was generated by part-time faculty. The average class size over the past three academic years has been approximately 19 for lower division undergraduate, 12 for upper division undergraduate, and 8 for graduate classes. The average student-to-faculty ratio has been 14 to 1 for the past three academic years. Further, in exit surveys conducted on graduating seniors over the past three academic years, students have consistently rated high satisfaction with the availability of faculty; more than 90% of exiting seniors each year have indicated they were satisfied or very satisfied with faculty availability.

Teaching loads for full-time faculty are specified in the [Faculty Manual](#).^[25] Twelve semester contact hours of regularly scheduled courses per semester is the usual undergraduate teaching load. The teaching load during a semester when one or more graduate courses are taught is nine hours. Reduction in this load may be made due to added administrative or other responsibilities carried by the faculty member, including research obligations associated with grants. More details regarding employment practices are presented in the [narrative response to Standard 6.3 – Faculty appointment and evaluation](#).^[26] and specific course assignments of full-time and part-time faculty for the 2019-20 academic year are provided on the faculty rosters available via the [narrative response to Standard 6.2.a – Faculty qualifications](#).^[27]

Adequacy of Full-time Faculty for Remote Instruction. Instruction of online courses draws from the same faculty base as traditional courses – there is no separate online faculty. Completion programs of study at the remote campus locations of USC Salkehatchie and USC Sumter employ both face-to-face instruction and online classes. As stipulated in the narrative response to [Standard 6.2.c – Program coordination](#).^[28], all remote programs of study have a full-time program coordinator located on-site. Online classes are scheduled and evaluated in the same manner as traditional courses, and are counted in faculty teaching loads no differently than traditional classes. The course management system, Blackboard, is used for traditional courses (e.g., for assignment submissions), hybrid and flipped classes, as well as online classes. Faculty are provided assistance in the development of online materials and classes through the Office of Distance Education and the Center for Teaching Excellence. The activities and support provided by these offices are more fully presented in the narrative response to [Standard 6.5 – Faculty Development](#).^[29]

Adequacy of Full-time Faculty for Professional Accreditations. With the inclusion of programs at the remote sites; online degree completion programs; and traditional delivery programs on the main campus, USC Aiken offers 13 different degrees in 45 undergraduate and 4 graduate programs of study. Approximately 57% of the programs of study are accredited by a professional body or association. Professional accrediting bodies require an adequate number of faculty to ensure

student to faculty ratios meet prescribed standards. All business degree programs at the USC Aiken are accredited by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business. The teacher education programs are accredited by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation. Nursing degree programs are accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education. The Bachelor of Arts degree in Music is accredited by the National Association of Schools of Music. The Bachelor of Science degree in Chemistry is approved by the American Chemical Society. The Bachelor of Science in Industrial Process Engineering has been accredited by the Engineering Accreditation Commission of ABET, the global accreditor of college and university programs in applied and natural science, computing, engineering, and engineering technology. The Master of Science degree in Applied Clinical Psychology is accredited by the Master in Psychology and Counseling Accreditation Council.

Adequacy of Full-time Faculty for Scholarly Activities. Faculty at USC Aiken are actively engaged in scholarly and creative activities. The university encourages research and other scholarly endeavors by members of its faculty. Research is regarded as an indispensable adjunct to high quality education of undergraduate and graduate students. It is understood that research to be conducted at the University is to be devoted primarily to broadening the faculty member's competence and professional ability and to furthering the general objective of expanding the horizons of knowledge. An overview of scholarly activities, presented in Table 6.1-2, demonstrates the adequacy of the number of full-time faculty to meet research-related goals of the institution. Specific scholarly activities are reported in the end-of-year reports of academic units presented in Table 6.1-1.

Table 6.1-2. Scholarly Activities of Full-time Faculty Over The Past Three Academic Years

Scholarly Activity	Academic Year		
	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Scholarly articles / chapters	132	166	186
Conference Presentations	252	264	284
Grants	43	55	54
Creative Works	49	51	53
Published books	11	6	6
Number of full-time faculty	123	154	159

Adequacy of Full-time Faculty for Student Advisement. Data indicate that on average there is an adequacy of full-time faculty for student advisement. In 2017-18, the overall average advisee load was 18.84 students per faculty advisor and in 2018-19 the average dropped to 17.52 students per faculty member. Further, based on annually conducted student surveys of the quality of academic advisement, 94.4% of the students surveyed in 2018-19 indicated they were satisfied or very satisfied with the availability of their advisor.

Nevertheless, there have been concerns raised among some faculty regarding advisement loads, particularly in popular majors such as Nursing and Exercise and Sports Science. As a result, the university has started monitoring the variability of advisement loads. As shown in Table 6.1-3, there is considerable variability across academic units in average advisement loads. In 2018-19, the standard deviation in advisement loads was 29.0.

Table 6.1-3. Average Student Advisement Loads by Academic Department

Academic Unit	Academic Year			
	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Biology and Geology	16.79	18.57	19.03	18.29
Business Administration	24.53	23.28	21.83	19.25
Chemistry and Physics	8.64	8.43	8.77	5.50
Communication	21.08	22.17	27.70	20.90
Education	29.46	27.23	27.76	20.76
English	3.54	8.44	9.13	8.00
Exercise and Sports Science	71.00	63.25	53.50	47.88
History, Political Science, & Philosophy	5.55	6.50	6.40	5.86
Interdisciplinary Studies	11.00	12.50	8.50	6.00
Mathematical Sciences and Engineering	15.69	16.70	15.20	14.80
Nursing	3.84	24.44	26.71	58.36
Psychology	19.56	18.89	19.67	20.69
Sociology	13.78	15.81	14.50	11.50
Visual and Performing Arts	9.50	9.95	9.70	8.12

Research from an ad-hoc Retention, Progression and Graduation Committee in conjunction with strategic planning efforts have identified academic advising as the focus for the institution's Quality Enhancement Plan. The University is committed to redesigning academic advising to include creating a centralized advising center staffed with professional advisors to serve first-year students. With more dedicated time with

new students, professional advisors will better be able to develop relationships with students, help students understand degree requirements, and explore career options with the Career Services Center. These improved services to students should result in increased retention and progression and decreased time to degree completion. Faculty will still serve as mentors and advisors for continuing students, helping to improve engagement with students; but with freshman students being advised by professional staff, advisee loads for faculty should decrease in the high demand majors.

Adequacy of Full-time Faculty for Service Activities. There are 12 [standing committees of Faculty Assembly](#) ^[30] with a total of 74 full-time faculty slots on which full-time faculty may serve. Election to a committee is typically for a maximum of three consecutive years and no faculty member may serve on more than two committees at any one time. The university establishes [ad-hoc committees](#) ^[31] and task forces on an as-needed basis. In addition, academic departments and schools have committees such as faculty searches, student recruitment, and programmatic assessment on which their faculty may serve. Faculty provide professional services as grant reviewers and editors / reviewers for scholarly journals, along with various forms of community service. Such activities are reported annually in the end-of-year reports of academic units presented in Table 6.1-1. With 159 full-time faculty, there has to date been no difficulty filling vacancies or finding faculty who are willing to serve.

Supporting Documentation

1. [USC System Policy ACAF 1.06 – Academic Titles for Faculty and Unclassified Academic Staff Positions](#)
2. [USC Aiken Faculty Manual: Conditions of Appointment](#)
3. [USC Aiken Faculty Manual: Instructional Responsibilities](#)
4. [USC Aiken Faculty Manual: Advisement and Counseling](#)
5. [USC Aiken Faculty Manual: Scholarship](#)
6. [USC Aiken Faculty Manual: Service](#)
7. [USC Aiken Faculty Manual: Non-tenure Track Appointments](#)

8. [USC System Policy ACAF 1.00 - Recruitment and Appointment of Tenured, Tenure-Track, and Non-Tenure-Track Faculty](#)
9. [USC Aiken Mission Statement](#)
10. [USC Aiken Strategic Plan](#)
11. [Department of Biology & Geology End-of-Year Reports](#)
12. [Department of Chemistry & Physics End-of-Year Reports](#)
13. [Department of Communication End-of-Year Reports](#)
14. [Department of English End-of-Year Reports](#)
15. [Department of Exercise & Sports Science End-of-Year Reports](#)
16. [Department of History, Political Science, & Philosophy End-of-Year Reports](#)
17. [Department of Languages, Literatures & Cultures End-of-Year Reports](#)
18. [Department of Mathematical Sciences End-of-Year Reports](#)
19. [Department of Psychology End-of-Year Reports](#)
20. [Department of Sociology End-of-Year Reports](#)
21. [Department of Visual & Performing Arts End-of-Year Reports](#)
22. [School of Business Administration End-of-Year Reports](#)
23. [School of Education End-of-Year Reports](#)
24. [School of Nursing End-of-Year Reports](#)
25. [USC Aiken Faculty Manual: Teaching Load](#)
26. [Narrative Response to Standard 6.3 – Faculty appointment and evaluation](#)
27. [Narrative Response to Standard 6.2.a – Faculty qualifications](#)
28. [Narrative Response to Standard 6.2.c – Program coordination](#)
29. [Narrative Response to Standard 6.5 – Faculty Development](#)
30. [USC Aiken Faculty Manual: Faculty Assembly Bylaws: Standing Committees](#)
31. [USC Aiken Faculty Manual: Faculty Assembly Bylaws: Ad-hoc Committees](#)