



Operating Policy and Procedure

OP 28.001 Faculty Qualifications

DATE: May 20, 2020

PURPOSE: The purpose of this Operating Policy/Procedure (OP) is to establish the policy regarding faculty qualifications.

REVIEW: This OP will be reviewed in October for even-numbered years by the Vice President for Instruction and Academic Cabinet, with revisions forwarded to the Board of Trustees through President's Council by the Office of the President.

POLICY/PROCEDURE

1. General Policy

Faculty qualifications must be reviewed for each faculty member on a course-by-course basis to determine if faculty meet the qualifications guidelines determined by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC). Faculty qualifications evaluations will include a review of appropriate degree(s), coursework, further study, certificates, licenses, depth of work experience in the field, honors, awards, and other credentials determined to be relevant.

2. Definitions

- a. *General Education Courses:* Courses that can transfer to colleges/universities.
- b. *Transitional Courses:* Courses that prepare students for college-level coursework.
- c. *Occupational Courses:* Courses that are taken to prepare students for the workforce.
- d. *Life enrichment Courses:* Courses that lead to a skill or personal preference.

3. Faculty Qualifications

a. Minimum Qualifications Aligned with HLC Guidelines

The College verifies faculty qualifications on a course-by-course basis through the evaluation of appropriate credentials and professional history to ensure quality learning experiences for students, while recognizing these qualifications may differ depending on the type of coursework. Only academic degrees and certificates granted from regionally accredited institutions recognized by the U.S. Department of Education will be considered. Official transcripts and other credentialing documents must be on file.

i. General Education or Other Non-Occupational Courses

Faculty members teaching college-level general education or other non-occupational courses (i.e., courses not designed to prepare students directly for a career) must hold a master's degree or higher in the discipline or subfield of the course(s) they teach. If a faculty member holds a master's degree or higher in a discipline or subfield other than that in which he or she is teaching, that faculty member must have completed a minimum of 18 graduate credit hours in the discipline or subfield in which they teach. When

evaluating credentials of faculty who have obtained a Master of Education degree, but not a master's degree in a discipline, graduate-level courses in the discipline and methods courses that are specifically for the teaching of that discipline may be considered for meeting the 18 graduate credit hour minimum.

- ii. **Occupational Courses (Career, Technical, Workforce, and Health Sciences Education)**
Faculty members teaching college-level occupational courses in certificate and associate degree programs must hold at least an associate degree or higher in the field and/or a combination of appropriate and relevant education, training, and tested experience. In addition, all faculty members teaching in programs approved for Perkins CTE Act funding must have a minimum of the equivalent of two years of full-time, non-teaching work experience in a relevant field. Additional academic degrees, licenses, and/or certifications may be required per program accreditation and industry standards.
- iii. **Transitional Studies Courses (below college-level)**
Faculty members teaching transitional studies courses must hold a bachelor's degree or higher in the discipline taught or a related discipline. Teaching experience with developmental or adult learners preferred.
- iv. **Life Enrichment Courses (Physical Education Activity, Applied Music, and Applied Art)**
Faculty members must have a minimum of an associate degree and technical training or industry credential and evidence of expertise in the field. Examples include:
 - a. **Physical Education Activity Courses** - Examples include bowling, baseball, golf, interval training, softball, and weightlifting courses. Faculty must demonstrate proficiency and hold appropriate certifications.
 - b. **Applied Music Courses** - Examples include applied voice and applied instrumental music courses. Faculty must demonstrate creative activity, expertise, ability, and talent validated through at least one of the following: wide critical and public acclaim, peer review, or publication.
 - c. **Applied Art Courses** – An example includes studio art courses. Faculty must demonstrate creative activity, expertise, ability, and talent validated through at least one of the following: wide critical and public acclaim, peer review, or publication.
- v. **Tested Experience**
Evaluation of earned academic credentials is the primary method for determining faculty qualifications. However, other credentials may be considered for specific disciplines, particularly applied and practice-oriented disciplines. The value of tested experience to determine faculty qualifications is largely dependent upon the relevance of the experience both to the degree level and to the specific content of the course(s). Tested experience implies that some objective measure ensures that the individual's knowledge and expertise are sufficient for determining what students must learn and have learned.

Faculty members may have a breadth and depth of experience outside of the classroom in real-world situations relevant to the discipline in which the faculty member teaches that clearly contribute to student learning outcomes and can be considered in lieu of formal academic preparation. In such cases, the faculty member may present objective documentation of those experiences relevant to the teaching assignment to be considered for determining if the faculty member is qualified under tested experience guidelines. Using tested experience as a method for qualifying teaching faculty should be used judiciously and should not be construed as standard practice. Tested experience guidelines presented herein will be applied consistently.

Tested Experience Guidelines:

- a. A minimum of an associate degree is required for all teaching faculty. Some disciplines/programs may require a minimum of a bachelor's degree.
- b. Teaching experience does not equate to tested experience.
- c. Alternative credentials must be directly relevant to the course(s) to be taught.
- d. A minimum of the equivalent of five years of full-time professional experience relevant to the specific content and learning outcomes of the course(s) for which the individual is being reviewed is required.
- e. Alternative credentials documentation that may be considered include:
 - i. Board or licensure exams
 - ii. Industry certifications
 - iii. Industry training records
 - iv. Department of Labor recognized apprenticeships
 - v. Recognition in journals or textbooks
 - vi. Professional presentations
 - vii. Professional registries
 - viii. Publications, other than through vanity presses
 - ix. Honors, awards, and/or commendations directly related to the discipline
 - x. Letters of support from past and current employers or colleagues on business stationery that speak directly to work in the discipline
 - xi. Other discipline-related documentation that demonstrates third-party recognition of the applicant's expertise in the field

4. Faculty Qualification Procedure

a. Credentialing Documentation

Candidates for all faculty positions are responsible for assuring that their official transcripts are submitted to the Human Resources Office. Candidates are also responsible for providing evidence of licensure and/or certification in disciplines where such credentials are required. Failure to provide such documentation in a timely manner or falsification or misrepresentation of credentials may result in withdrawal of teaching assignments and termination. Credentialing documents should be on file with the Human Resources Office no less than one month prior to the start of the teaching assignment.

All documentation used to qualify faculty members to teach in their respective disciplines and programs will be maintained in the faculty member's permanent personnel file located in the

Human Resources Office. A completed Qualified Faculty Rubric, must also be on file with the Human Resources Office prior to the release of a teaching contract.

i. Documentation Requirements:

a. Transcripts

Faculty members must submit all official transcripts of academic coursework and degrees to the Human Resources Office. Faculty members who have completed college or university coursework outside of the United States must obtain a complete evaluation of their foreign transcripts and are responsible for providing a certified third-party equivalency (e.g., Educational Credential Evaluators, Inc., International Education Research Foundation, Inc.). Official transcripts and equivalency evaluations will be maintained in the employee's permanent personnel file.

b. Related Work Experience When Used Toward Qualifying Faculty Under Tested Experience

To document relevant work experience, references regarding the faculty member's work experience—will be accepted for review and consideration. If the faculty member is self-employed, letters of reference should be obtained from one or more clients who can verify the nature and scope of the work performed by the faculty member. Other documents such as state sales tax documents, assumed name certificates filed with the county clerk's office, or published articles referencing the faculty member's work experience may also be accepted for review.

c. Non-Teaching Work Experience for Faculty Teaching in Perkins Approved Programs

Faculty members teaching in programs approved for Perkins CTE Act funding must have a minimum of the equivalent of two years of full-time, non-teaching work experience in a relevant field. A current resume with sufficient detail to document relevant experience is required.

d. Other Documents

If a professional licensure, certification, award, or other demonstrated competencies and achievements are used to qualify a faculty member to teach in a related field, official copies must be included in the faculty member's permanent personnel file. If licensures and/or certifications have expiration dates and are used to qualify a faculty member, a copy of the new documents must be forwarded to the Human Resources Office each time a renewal is received for inclusion in the faculty member's permanent personnel file.

5. Faculty Qualification Roles and Responsibilities

a. Faculty qualifications must be reviewed for each faculty member on a course-by-course basis to determine if faculty meet the qualifications guidelines established by the HLC. Throughout the review process, subject matter experts may be consulted.

i. Initial review of full-time/ part-time faculty teaching qualifications is conducted by the appropriate Department Chair/Program Director.

ii. Qualified Faculty Rubric Approval Chain after faculty verifies (by signing) the information is correct:

- a. Chair/Program Director - Conduct initial review, sign, and forward to Dean.
 - b. Dean - Conduct secondary review, sign, and forward to the Vice President for Instruction.
 - c. Vice President for Instruction – Conduct final review and approval.
 - d. All finalized official documentation will be filed in the Human Resources office.
- iii. Where there is uncertainty as to whether or not a faculty member holds the credentials necessary to teach a course or courses, per HLC guidelines, forward course code(s), number(s), title(s), course description(s), and credentials of faculty member via email to the Vice President for Instruction who will consult with appropriate Subject Matter Experts, other administration, and/or request further guidance from the College’s HLC Liaison.
 - iv. Final determination as to whether or not a faculty member is qualified to teach a particular course rests with the Vice President for Instruction.

6. Persons/Departments Affected

- a. Faculty
- b. Deans
- c. Vice President of Instruction
- d. Academic Departments

7. Forms

Qualified Faculty Rubric

8. Related Information

[HLC Guidelines on Faculty Qualifications](#)

9. Right to Change Policy

The College reserves the right to interpret, change, modify, amend, or rescind this policy, in whole or in part, at any time, without prior notice or consent.

10. Approval Date: March 17, 2021

11. Past Revisions:

- a. March 17, 2021: Policy amended to clarify policy review requirements.