Faculty Qualifications

UNIVERSITY POLICY #253

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SECTION 1: Purpose

1.1 To contribute to the accomplishment of the mission of the institution and ensure compliance with related accreditation requirements, this policy establishes standards of qualification for faculty members with teaching responsibilities at West Liberty University. This policy establishes standards for tenured, tenure-track, non-tenure-track and adjunct faculty who serve as instructor of record for any credit-bearing course at the University. It does not include guest or visiting lecturers who do not have grading responsibilities in a course or non-credit-bearing courses.

1.2 Typically, a faculty member's academic preparation is the primary means of establishing qualification to teach in a particular discipline or program. In some cases a faculty member may be deemed qualified based on alternate qualifications for a specific course or set of courses. These alternate qualifications may include, for example, licensure or certification, awards and other recognitions, or work in the field. In some cases, a faculty member may be deemed qualified based on a combination of academic and other qualifications.

SECTION 2: Academic Qualifications

2.1 For undergraduate courses faculty may be deemed academically qualified if they have earned:

2.1.1 A master's degree or higher in the teaching field

2.1.2 A master's degree or higher in a closely related field, as determined by 1) the Program Director or Department Chair as appropriate, and 2) the Dean; or

2.1.3 A master's degree or higher in any discipline plus at least eighteen (18) graduate credit hours in the teaching field or a closely related field, as determined by 1) the Program Director or Department Chair as appropriate, and 2) the Dean.

2.2 For graduate courses or mixed graduate/undergraduate courses, faculty may be deemed academically qualified if they have earned:

2.2.1 A terminal degree (Ph.D., Ed.D., MFA, etc.) in the teaching fields.

2.2.2 A terminal degree in a closely related field.

2.2.3 A terminal degree in any discipline with at least eighteen (18) graduate credit hours in the teaching field or a closely related.

2.3 Any degrees or graduate credit hours submitted for consideration of academic qualification must have been earned at regionally accredited academic institutions or be otherwise determined to be of suitable quality by the Office of the Provost.

2.4 Determination of whether a degree is terminal in a field and whether a field is closely related to the teaching field shall be determined by 1) the Program Director or Department Chair as appropriate, and 2) the appropriate Dean.

2.5 The academic administration of individual academic programs may establish additional qualifications to deem a faculty member qualified to teach in the program or for specific courses.

2.6 Other policies or procedures may require additional qualifications to deem a faculty member qualified to teach graduate courses.

SECTION 3: Alternate Qualifications

3.1 In the absence of the academic qualifications articulated above, qualification to teach in a particular field may be based on other credentials. In many of these cases, a program or department may justify a faculty member's assignment to teach a given course based on a combination of academic, experiential, and other credentials. The following examples illustrate the use of other credentials to qualify a faculty member for an instructional role.

3.1.1 **Licensure or Certification**

3.1.1.1 A faculty member holds an MBA and is a Certified Public Accountant and thus is qualified to teach undergraduate accounting courses.

3.1.1.2 A faculty member holds an MBA and Microsoft Office certifications and thus is qualified to teach a particular CIS course.

3.1.1.3 A faculty member holds a bachelor's degree in nursing, is licensed as an RN, and meets the experiential criteria to teach nursing established by the WV State Board of Nursing and thus is qualified to teach in an undergraduate clinical nursing course.

3.1.2 **Honors and Awards**

3.1.2.1 A faculty member holds a bachelor's degree in English and has received several prestigious regional and national awards for published work and thus is qualified to teach undergraduate creative writing courses

3.1.2.2 A faculty member holds a bachelor's degree in dietetics and has won numerous regional and national awards for his or her work as the food services coordinator for an area hospital and thus is qualified to teach a special topics undergraduate tourism and events management course in food preparation and management.

3.1.3 **Professional Experience**

3.1.3.1 A faculty member holds a bachelor's degree in dance and has over ten years' experience as a professional dancer including an invitation to dance with the Moscow ballet and thus is qualified to teach undergraduate dance courses.

3.1.3.2 A faculty member holds a master's degree in history and has worked for twelve years in various leadership positions within politics and government and thus is qualified to teach undergraduate political science courses.

3.1.4 **Distinguished Publications**

3.1.4.1 A faculty member holds a master's degree in social work and has published extensively in top- tier refereed journals on subjects related to social problems and government policy and thus is qualified to teach undergraduate sociology courses.

3.1.4.2 A faculty member holds a doctorate in electrical engineering but has published two monographs and several refereed journal articles in the physics of circuits and in electromagnetic theory and thus is qualified to teach those subjects in physics.

3.2 Faculty who are qualified based on other-than-academic credentials are approved by the dean of the faculty member's college and the Provost on a case-by-case basis and are the exception rather than the rule. Except in very rare cases, the bachelor's-prepared faculty member will not be allowed to teach graduate students.

SECTION 4: Review and Approval of Qualifications

4.1 All transcripts and other credentials will be evaluated by the screening committee, Program Director or Department Chair, the Dean and the Provost at the time of hiring.

4.2 Copies of all credentials must be maintained in the faculty personnel files in the Office of the Provost. These credentials shall include official transcripts of relevant graduate work, a copy of any relevant certification or licensure, and a current CV. If the academic credentials include credits awarded by a non-U.S. institution, a foreign credentials evaluation report must also be provided.

4.3 Responsibility for ensuring appropriate credentials for all faculty teaching in a given program or department rests ultimately with the Program Director or Department Chair and the Dean of the college in which the faculty member teaches.