Qualifications for Adjunct Faculty (Non-tenure Track) Engaged in Graduate Education

In accordance with the university’s mission, vision and core values, the faculty and administration are committed to high academic standards. Furthermore, the GVSU community affirms: 1) that achieving and maintaining academic rigor and quality is as important to post-baccalaureate programs as it is to baccalaureate programs, and 2) that policies and procedures that ensure appropriate rigor and quality are essential. Central to the quality of any educational program are qualified faculty committed to the educational ideals of the institution and higher education in general. Two factors conspire to achieve a quality educational program. First, it is incumbent on the University, Colleges, and departments to hire qualified faculty and second, faculty should pursue common goals and standards regarding post-baccalaureate education. Thus, the policies outlining Adjunct Faculty Engaged in Graduate Education who are the instructor of record have been instituted to ensure the quality of graduate education at Grand Valley State University. The term Adjunct Faculty is defined in Chapter 4 Section 3 of the Administrative Manual.

A. Rationale and Philosophy. There are widely recognized differences between baccalaureate and post-baccalaureate education deeply embedded within academic culture. These differences include the basic tenet that graduate/professional students are expected to work at a higher intellectual, more demanding and rigorous educational level. To ensure that post-baccalaureate programs maintain these fundamental distinctions requires that the faculty acknowledge such distinctions conceptually and through action, and that the University, Colleges, and departments hire faculty qualified to participate in post-baccalaureate education.

Grand Valley State University adjunct faculty engaged in both graduate and graduate professional education must be current with the knowledge of their disciplines, and are expected to be active in advancing their field through ongoing scholarly activity and appropriate service. In general, adjunct faculty should be able to demonstrate excellent classroom instruction and active and sustained scholarly and professional service.

B. Expectations for Adjunct Faculty.

1. Responsibilities. Adjunct faculty meeting the criteria set forth below may teach graduate/professional courses within a precise area related to their expertise as defined by and related to the topic and field of their highest degree or distinguished professional achievement. Minimal coursework related to a particular topic or subject does not constitute expertise. Health professionals may teach courses related to their clinical experience and expertise. In addition, adjunct faculty may also serve on graduate student committees, supervise graduate students in clinical settings, and may supervise a clinical case report but may not supervise a graduate student thesis or project.

2. Minimum Criteria for Adjunct Faculty.
   a. Education
      i. an earned doctorate or other terminal degree, OR,
ii. a master’s degree with at least three years of qualifying experience post-master’s degree conferral and prior approval of the department chair of the appropriate department or program, OR,

iii. in some cases, holding a college degree and being recognized by peers for distinguished professional accomplishments (e.g. journalism awards). In these cases, prior approval of the department chair and the appropriate college dean who will forward a written rationale for the decision to the Dean of Graduate Studies, OR,

iv. health professionals who meet the requirements of accrediting organizations, have the appropriate clinical experience and expertise, and appropriate degree for the profession.

b. Adjunct faculty members must present evidence of scholarly activity, creative activity, or equivalent professional accomplishments within the last three years. Although ongoing graduate level course work and other professional development may be relevant, alone, they do not qualify an individual to be an adjunct faculty member engaged in graduate education. Scholarly activity may include but is not limited to giving presentations at professional conferences and publications in professional journals. Other professional accomplishments beyond professional development may also be considered. In some cases, a professional with unique skills and qualifications engaged in the ongoing application of current knowledge (e.g. attorneys practicing business law and clinicians) may be qualified to teach graduate courses within the area of their expertise.

Approval for Standing of Adjunct Faculty Engaged in Graduate Education.
1. Procedure for Adjunct Faculty. Applicants must provide evidence that they meet the expectations for adjunct faculty assigned to teach graduate/professional courses or supervising graduate students in clinical settings. Qualifications will be determined upon the strength of the evidence presented in the application. The application shall be reviewed by the Departmental Chair who will make a recommendation to the College Dean for review and approval. A copy of the entire approved application and a list of the courses the applicant will be teaching shall be sent to the Office of Graduate Studies in a timely fashion, usually within three weeks of the beginning of each semester. The Office of Graduate Studies will prepare a summary of the qualifications of all adjunct faculty teaching graduate/professional courses or supervising graduate students in clinical settings and identify exceptions to the standards and policies to be shared with the respective college deans and the Provost.

a. Materials Required (Available from the OGS website www.gvsu.edu/gs):
   i. a completed application form; those who are employed directly by GVSU may use their G number to log in to the online application system available at:
      https://www.gvsu.edu/gs/applications/index.cfm?sb_path=login
   ii. a short narrative indicating the reason a faculty member is requesting standing to participate in graduate education;
   iii. a short narrative that summarizes one’s record of scholarship/performance, instruction, and professional service;
iv. a current curriculum vitae;
v. any additional information that provides evidence of scholarship/performance, teaching and professional service.