

Office of the Provost

Faculty Qualifications (in compliance with Higher Learning Commission guidelines)

ACADEMIC AFFAIRS PROCESS AND PROCEDURES

Effective date: January 2017

This document, in compliance with Higher Learning Commission (HLC) guidelines, is intended for all faculty teaching courses, and/or involved with development of curricula. It is not intended for other faculty roles, including University Libraries faculty.

This process must be followed for hiring of all teaching faculty – regular and adjunct. [A Faculty Qualifications Assurance Form](#) must be completed and submitted, along with a current resume/curriculum vita and official transcripts, as part of the hiring process for all teaching faculty.

**Faculty Qualifications (in
compliance with HLC
guidelines)
Office of the Provost
Grand Valley State
University**

Minimum Qualifications for a Faculty* Member

1. Qualified faculty members are identified primarily by academic credentials, but other factors,

including but not limited to full-time equivalent tested experience, are considered in determining whether a faculty member is qualified.

A. Using academic credentials to qualify faculty:

- i. Faculty have an academic degree in the discipline, or subfield of the discipline, in which they teach, and/or for which they develop curricula, with coursework at least one level above that of the courses being taught or developed, except in programs for terminal degrees or when full-time equivalent experience is established. An academic subfield refers to a component of the discipline in which the instruction is delivered. The key consideration is whether a degree in the field or a focus in the specialization held by a faculty member appropriately matches the courses, including General Education courses, the faculty member would teach in accordance with the conventions of the academic field.
- ii. 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, the faculty member is expected to have completed a minimum of 18 graduate credit hours in the discipline or subfield in which they teach.
- iii. Faculty teaching and supervising scholarly activity in graduate programs have the terminal degree determined by the discipline and have a record of research, scholarship or achievement appropriate for the graduate program.
- iv. Faculty teaching and supervising scholarly activity in terminal degree programs (e.g. DNP, DPT, Ph.D., Ed.D., etc.) have the same level of degree. Faculty guiding doctoral education have a record of scholarship and preparation to teach and supervise scholarly activity at the doctoral level. Research and scholarship are appropriate to the program and degree offered.
- v. Faculty who are not the instructor of record (often leading a discussion or lab section) have at least the same level of degree as the course being taught. In such cases, the instructor of record has the qualifications outlined in 1.A.i.-1.A.iv. OR 1.B.i.-1.B.iii., and has regular interaction with, and guidance of, the faculty members who are not the lead instructors in the course. The instructor of record is responsible for final assessment of the students in the course, including assigning grades.

B. Using full-time equivalent tested experience to qualify faculty (tested experience is defined as depth and breadth of experience outside of the classroom in non-academic situations relevant to the discipline in which the faculty member would be teaching) **if academic credentials are not met:**

- i. Faculty teaching bachelor's-level courses:
 - a. Have a minimum of a bachelor's degree in the discipline or subfield, AND a minimum of three (3) years full-time equivalent of tested experience in a related discipline to the courses; OR,
 - b. Have a minimum of a bachelor's degree in any discipline, AND a nationally recognized credential (certification, license, etc.) for the discipline or subfield, AND a minimum of

three (3) years full-time equivalent of tested experience in a related discipline to the courses.

ii. Faculty teaching master's-level courses:

- a. Have a minimum of a master's degree in the discipline or subfield, AND a minimum of three (3) years full-time equivalent of tested experience in a related discipline to the courses; OR
- b. Have a minimum of a master's degree in any discipline, AND a nationally-recognized credential (certification, license, etc.) for the discipline or subfield, AND a minimum of three (3) years full-time equivalent of tested experience in a related discipline to the courses; OR,
- c. In limited special circumstances, a faculty member may teach a master's-level course with a bachelor's degree if they are recognized by their peers for distinguished professional accomplishments, AND are considered an expert in the content covered in the course.

iii. Faculty teaching doctoral-level courses:

- a. Have a doctoral degree in any discipline, AND a nationally-recognized credential (certification, license, etc.) for the discipline or subfield, AND a minimum of five (5) years full-time equivalent of tested experience in a related discipline to the courses; OR,
- b. In limited special circumstances, a faculty member may teach a doctoral-level course with a master's degree if they are recognized by their peers for distinguished professional accomplishments, AND are considered an expert in the content covered in the course, AND have a minimum of ten (10) years full-time equivalent of tested experience in a related field to the course.

Ensuring Hiring of Qualified Faculty

1. All faculty position postings or solicitations must include requirements consistent with the Minimum Qualifications for a Faculty Member.
2. A current resume or curriculum vita, along with official academic transcripts or other documents verifying credentials, must be submitted prior to the hire for all faculty positions. Records of the resume/curriculum vita and academic credentials will be kept by the Human Resources Office for all faculty hires. It is the responsibility of the unit head and appointing officer to ensure that these documents are collected and submitted to the Human Resources Office.
3. For regular and affiliate faculty, the University hiring process protocol will be followed for selecting a qualified pool of candidates for interviews. This process includes the unit head, the appointing officer, and the Human Resources Office reviewing and approving the candidates

selected for interviews. The review will use the Minimum Qualifications for a Faculty Member when selecting and approving the pool of candidates for interviews.

4. For part-time adjunct and visiting faculty hiring, the unit head and appointing officer will ensure that candidates meet the Minimum Qualifications for a Faculty Member prior to hiring the selected candidate.

5. A Faculty Qualifications Assurance Form must be completed for every faculty hire. The form is kept with the faculty resume/curriculum vita and academic credentials by the Human Resources Office for all faculty hires. A copy of the form must accompany the hiring selection documents for regular and affiliate faculty when sent to the Office of the Provost for final hiring approval. It is the responsibility of the unit head and appointing officer to ensure that this form is completed and submitted to the Human Resources Office.

Ensuring Staffing of Courses with Qualified Faculty

1. Documentation of faculty credentials is reviewed annually. For regular faculty, credentials will be updated annually via the Faculty Activity Report in Digital Measures. For adjunct faculty, new credentials will be submitted whenever the faculty member indicates a change in their credentials when confirming their appointment.

2. Each semester, the unit head will review staffing plans prior to submission to the Dean's Office to ensure that courses are staffed by faculty with appropriate qualifications.

3. The Dean's Office will perform a final review of the staffing plan each semester to ensure that courses are appropriately staffed.

4. The Office of the Provost will conduct an annual review of course staffing to ensure compliance.