

**Title: #IV-13. Faculty Qualifications**

**Date: March 7, 2023** (replaces version dated 7/12/17)

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To be eligible for a faculty appointment to teach credit classes, either on a full-time, adjunct, or a part-time basis, a person must hold appropriate credentials as outlined below and must take full responsibility for submitting verification of credentials with the Human Resources Office. Documents verifying qualifications include:

- official college transcripts of all academic credit and earned degrees;
- licensure or certificates validating professional status such as Registered Nurse, Certified Public Accountant, Chartered Life Underwriter, Licensed Professional Engineer, Licensed Teacher, etc.;
- certificates indicating journeyman status in recognized vocational fields; and,
- a criminal background check upon offer of employment.

The Higher Learning Commission documents, *Assumed Practices* and [Determining Qualified Faculty through HLC's Criteria for Accreditation and Assumed Practices](#), include the following guidelines that are applicable to WVU at Parkersburg faculty:

- Faculty teaching in higher education institutions should have completed a significant program of study in the discipline or subfield or possess an academic degree relevant to what they will teach and/or for which they will develop curricula, with substantial coursework at least one-level above that of the courses being taught or developed. Faculty teaching general education courses, or other non-occupational courses, typically hold a master's degree or higher in the discipline or subfield-or a master's degree or higher and a minimum of 18 graduate credit hours in the discipline or subfield in which they teach.
- Qualified faculty are identified primarily by credentials, but other factors, including but not limited to equivalent experience, may be considered by the institution in determining whether a faculty member is qualified. In some cases, such as practice-oriented courses, disciplines or programs, equivalent experience in the field may be needed as much as or more than formal educational preparation at a prescribed level in determining what students should know in order to be able to effectively perform within that practice-oriented discipline or program. This experience should be tested experience.
- The value of using tested experience to determine faculty qualifications depend upon the relevance of the experience both to the degree level and to the specific content of the course(s) for which the faculty member is responsible. 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.

- While not all faculty will possess the credentials that are regarded as “hallmarks,” the overall mix of the faculty, within a given program and/or institution, should establish a foundation for maintaining and strengthening educational quality. Generally, the same guidelines and principles should be used for employing part-time, adjunct, temporary, and/or non-tenure track faculty as are used in employing full-time, tenure-track, term, or tenured faculty, whose primary responsibility is teaching.

All academic credit and degrees appropriate to a teaching appointment must have been taken at recognized, regionally accredited colleges or universities. All questions regarding the status of degree-granting institutions shall be referred to the Vice President for Academic Affairs.

A. Baccalaureate, Transfer (AA and AS), and General Education Level Courses. Faculty who teach courses that are typically considered as General Education courses, are associated with baccalaureate degree programs and are transferable to other institutions as upper division credit, as well as courses associated with Associate in Arts or Associate in Science degrees and are transferable to other institutions to apply towards the baccalaureate degree, must:

- Hold, minimally, a master's degree from a recognized, regionally accredited institution as described in Section C. or hold a master's degree or higher and 18 graduate credit hours in the discipline or subfield; and/or
- Meet criteria established by discipline-related accrediting agencies as relevant.

B. Certificate, Associate of Applied Science, Bachelor of Applied Science, and Bachelor of Applied Technology.

- Faculty who teach courses associated with the Associate in Applied Science degree or the certificate degrees must hold, minimally, either a bachelor's degree from a recognized, regionally accredited institution with major emphasis in the teaching discipline or subfield, and/or a combination of education, training, and tested experience Section C. below.
- Faculty who teach courses associated with an Associate in Applied Science degree program that transfers to an applied baccalaureate degree or faculty teaching in an applied baccalaureate program must hold, minimally, a master's degree from a recognized, regionally accredited institution in the discipline or subfield or a master's degree or higher and 18 graduate credit hours in the discipline or subfield and/or a combination of education, training, and tested experience as described in Section C. below.
- In all cases, faculty teaching in Associate in Applied Science or Certificate programs transferring to baccalaureate programs and applied baccalaureate programs must meet criteria established by discipline-related accrediting agencies as relevant.

C. Subfields, Degree Equivalencies, and Tested Experience

For the purposes of this policy, an academic subfield refers to a component of the discipline in which the instruction is delivered. The focus, in this instance, is on the courses being taught

and the appropriateness of faculty qualifications with reference to such courses. The underlying issue is whether a degree in the field or a focus in the specialization held by a faculty member appropriately matches, in accordance with the conventions of the academic field, the courses the faculty member would teach. Subfields can be determined by a consensus of the institution's faculty members who teach in the discipline and the Division Chair for that discipline in consultation with and with approval of the Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Tested experience is not based exclusively on years of teaching experience. To be qualified on the basis of tested experience, faculty must have a documented record of discipline-related practice of a level that ensures mastery of content of the courses taught and ongoing currency in the field.

Faculty who do not hold at least the required baccalaureate degree minimum and who teach for the certificate, associate of applied science, bachelor of applied science, or bachelor of applied technology degree programs, and therefore may be qualified based on tested experience, may be eligible to teach with certifying documentation of journeyman rating or equivalent status in a recognized vocational field, or recognized professional certifications (i.e. Certified Public Accountant, Certified Law Enforcement Officer, Registered Nurse, etc.) plus successful work experience in that field as follows:

- Three years of successful work experience for union craft or trade field experience.
- Five years of successful work experience for non-union craft or trade field experience.
- Four years of successful Military experience in related trade field experience.

Faculty who teach in baccalaureate and transfer (but not general education) courses and who do not hold at least a master's degree in the discipline or subfield or a master's degree or higher and 18 graduate credit hours in the discipline or subfield may be qualified based on tested experience-as follows:

- Bachelor's degree plus professional certifications in the related discipline or subfield.
- Bachelor's degree plus 18 graduate credit hours in the discipline or subfield being taught plus 3-years of successful documented employment in the discipline or subfield.
- Related bachelor's degree plus 5 years of successful documented and substantial employment outside the field of education in the discipline or subfield to be taught.
- Distinguished professional record in a special field for persons who may be hired as visiting or temporary faculty.

#### D. Evaluation Process

For new hires for full-time faculty positions, pursuant to Answer Book #IV-8A, *Hiring Guidelines*, the institution's Executive Director, Human Resources and Compliance reviews and approves all position announcements before they are posted to assure that the minimum qualifications required are nondiscriminatory and consistent with the above stated guidelines

of WVUP. When screening applicants, qualifications related to subfields and/or tested experience will be reviewed by the specific position's screening committee to assure compliance with qualification guidelines.

For new hires for part-time and adjunct faculty positions, or existing faculty members considered for new assignments, who do not hold a master's degree or a master's degree and 18 graduate credit hours in the discipline or related subfield, the faculty member's Division Chair, in consultation with members of the division and the faculty member's program coordinator (where applicable), shall provide a written explanation and justification for the decision to assign the individual to the courses taught based on that faculty member's qualifications and tested experience. The justification shall be done in consultation with and with approval of the Vice President for Academic Affairs.

**Responsible Administrator: Vice President for Academic Affairs, 304-424-8244**