



Eastern Kentucky University

Policy and Regulation Library

Academic Regulation: 4.6.1ACR

Responsible Office(s): Office of the Provost

Effective: January 6, 2009

Next Review Date: Spring 2031

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Determining Qualifications for Faculty Teaching Credit-Bearing Courses

Statement

Eastern Kentucky University will employ qualified faculty to teach credit-bearing courses. The University places primary importance on academic credentials, which must be awarded from accredited institutions. In addition to academic credentials, other demonstrations of expertise may be considered, as appropriate, when establishing qualifications. Faculty qualifications will be linked to the course(s) a faculty member is assigned to teach and will be initially determined by the hiring department as reflected in the Faculty Credentials and Qualifications Matrix. Approval of faculty qualifications must be granted by the hiring department, College Dean, and the Provost. The minimum institutional criteria for employing faculty are outlined in this policy.

Purpose

This policy ensures that the University uses instructional faculty who are academically prepared to teach at the undergraduate and graduate levels. When other demonstrations of expertise are used in lieu of academic credentials, this policy ensures that faculty expertise is appropriate for teaching college-level courses. Finally, this policy ensures that the University will adhere to accreditor expectations.

Entities Affected

- Colleges
- Departments
- Faculty
- Provost Office

Background

Eastern Kentucky University (EKU) is dedicated to high-quality instruction, scholarship, and service, therefore, the University hires and retains highly qualified faculty. ECU is committed to meeting the minimum qualification guidelines established by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). Therefore, the University has established this policy, including credential guidelines and procedures for following the policy.

The University recognizes that the initial determination of appropriate qualifications rests at the department level. In making this determination, departments must examine all relevant documentation (see below) and must provide a cogent and evidenced justification when qualifications do not meet the minimum academic credentials. Subsequent to the departmental recommendation, faculty qualifications are subject to review and approval by the Dean and the Provost.

Criteria for Faculty Qualifications

Minimum Academic Credentials

A. Faculty Teaching Undergraduate Courses

Faculty teaching undergraduate courses, must hold a doctorate or master's degree in the teaching discipline or a relevant field or master's degree with a concentration in the teaching discipline (a minimum of 18 graduate semester hours in the teaching discipline is a commonly accepted benchmark).

B. Faculty Teaching Graduate Courses

Faculty teaching graduate courses must hold a doctorate or terminal degree in the teaching or relevant discipline. Faculty teaching graduate clinical, practicum, studio, or internship courses that do not hold a terminal degree must hold at least a master's degree in the teaching discipline and certification/licensure or demonstrated clinical/practice leadership in a specialization relevant to the course content.

C. Secondary Instructors for Courses

Faculty and/or facilitators not designated as primary instructors must have a bachelor's degree in the teaching or relevant discipline or at least 18 graduate hours in the teaching discipline if the bachelor's degree is not in the discipline. Secondary instructors must be under the direct, documented supervision of a faculty member experienced in the teaching discipline and be subject to planned and periodic evaluations.

D. Teaching Assistants (who are the Instructor of Record)

Teaching assistants who are the instructor of record for undergraduate courses or laboratories must have a master's in the teaching discipline or at least 18 graduate semester hours in the teaching or relevant discipline. Additionally, all teaching assistants who are the instructor of record must be under the direct, documented supervision of a

faculty member experienced in the teaching discipline, participate in regular in-service training, and be subject to planned and periodic evaluations.

Justifications for Faculty Not Meeting Minimum Academic Credentials

The University may employ faculty members who do not meet minimum academic credentials but meet additional qualification standards. In this case, a Justifications for Faculty Not Meeting Minimum Academic Credentials Form must be submitted; approved by the Chair, College Dean, Dean of the Graduate School (for faculty teaching graduate courses), and the Provost; and filed in the Faculty File prior to the faculty member being assigned to teach the requested courses.

Justification may be made for faculty not meeting minimum academic credentials who demonstrate external validation of qualifications in the teaching field, such as regional or national recognitions, referred publications, leadership activities, appropriate certification, or teaching or clinical experience in the discipline. {From the SACSCOC Resource Manual: “Examples could include appropriately related work experiences in the field, professional licensure and certifications related to the teaching assignment, honors and awards, continuing professional development, relevant peer-reviewed publications, and/or continuous documented excellence in teaching.” (p45)}

Procedures

Determining Terminal Degrees

Each department will determine the appropriate terminal degree(s) and relevant disciplines for faculty as related to promotion and tenure as well as course-level qualifications, as defined above, for its discipline. Required terminal degrees will be outlined in Promotion and Tenure Policies as well as the Faculty Credential and Qualification Matrix and will be approved in accordance with Policy 4.6.4. Written justification for this determination must be provided to the Dean and to the Provost. The Provost will provide a final review for terminal degree designations. The list of terminal degrees will be reviewed every three years by the Office of Academic Affairs and updated as appropriate.

Initial Determination of Qualifications

1. Prior to hiring, the department must ensure that potential faculty, regardless of full-time or part-time status, meets or exceeds the criteria outlined in this policy and the Faculty Credential and Qualification Matrix. Therefore, the department is responsible for ensuring that all credential documents are provided to the corresponding Dean.
2. The Department Chair will provide to the college Dean all relevant materials regarding qualifications. In situations where the basis for qualification is not the minimum academic credential, the chair will submit the Justifications for Faculty

Not Meeting Minimum Academic Credentials Form and all required documentation for approval.

3. The Dean, after evaluating the materials and providing an approval recommendation, will submit all relevant materials to the Provost.
4. The Provost will evaluate the materials and provide a decision regarding the hiring of the faculty member to teach. A written response will be provided to the Dean. A signed copy of the approval form will be placed in the faculty member's file.

Ongoing Determination of Qualifications

1. The Academic Colleges, with support from the Office of the Provost, are responsible for ensuring ongoing compliance with this policy and with the University's accrediting agencies. The Deans of each college will monitor the faculty hiring process and course assignments to evaluate if a faculty member appears to be out of compliance with qualification guidelines. The Dean's office must notify the appropriate Department Chairs.
2. Department Chairs, once notified, must submit the Justifications for Faculty Not Meeting Minimum Academic Credentials Form, and any supporting documentation. The Justifications for Faculty Not Meeting Minimum Academic Credentials Form will provide a sound and evidenced argument for qualifications and will provide specific details and documentation in support of that justification.
3. Once submitted, the Justifications for Faculty Not Meeting Minimum Academic Credentials Form and all supporting documentation will follow the approval process for Initial Determination of Qualifications outlined above.

Maintaining Faculty Files

An official file or portfolio on each member of the faculty must be maintained by the Dean's office. The faculty file will include pertinent, up-to-date information describing the qualifications of the faculty member, such as curriculum vitae, and institutional qualification justifications in nonstandard situations (e.g., copies of certificates, licenses, etc.). These files should also be made available in electronic format. Updated CVs will be submitted to the Chair and to the Dean each academic year.

Definitions

- **Clinical Course:** A course that requires application of professional or advanced knowledge and skill in the direct care/teaching of clients in laboratory settings including acute and community-based systems.
- **Credit-bearing Course:** Any course that is transcribed.
- **Day:** Day shall have the same meaning it has under Kentucky law, specifically KRS 446.030, where in computing any period of time, the day of the act or notification which the designated period of time begins to run is not to be included. The last day of the period so computed is to be included, unless it is a Saturday, a Sunday, a legal holiday, or a day on which the University is closed, in which event the period runs until the end of the next day which is not one (1) of the days just

mentioned. This applies even if the period of time prescribed or allowed is less than seven (7) days.

- **Documentation of Qualifications:** Suitable documentation for faculty qualifications includes, but is not limited to:

Required

- Transcripts from all post-baccalaureate institutions where academic credit has been awarded. The emphasis is on graduate work unless undergraduate coursework is necessary to demonstrate relevance. (*must be official upon hire)
- Current *dated* curriculum vita or resume

As Relevant

- Copies of relevant, current certificates
 - Copies of relevant, current licenses
 - Documentation of relevant awards or honors
 - Documentation of teaching effectiveness in the discipline or course(s) content
 - Syllabi for courses taught in the discipline or course(s) content
 - Work experience
 - Scholarly/creative achievements
- **Graduate Hours:** The minimum graduate hours in the teaching discipline is determined by semester hours. Therefore, any graduate hours earned by another calculation must be demonstrated as equivalent.
 - **Internship:** A course that requires application through practical work in an applied setting.
 - **Practicum:** A course that requires application through practical work in an applied setting.
 - **Primary Instructor (Instructor of Record):** Refers to a faculty member who is responsible for a course's integrity and delivery including:
 - The quality of course content
 - Assessment of students' fulfillment of learning outcomes for the course (directly or through supervision of secondary instructors)
 - Course grades
 - Coordinating/supervising secondary instructors, if applicable
 - **Provost:** Refers to either the Provost or his/her designee.
 - **Relevant Field:** A relevant field may be any field that reasonably can be demonstrated to provide the appropriate knowledge base for the course content and is identified in the departmental P&T policy and Faculty Credential and Qualifications Matrix.
 - **Secondary Instructors:** Refers to an individual who is under the direct supervision of a primary instructor and who may be responsible for the delivery of instruction for some or all parts of a course. This may include facilitators and/or teaching assistants. Secondary instructors do **not** have the authority to:
 - Assign final course grades

- Create or alter a syllabus for the course
- **Teaching Discipline:** The teaching discipline is defined as the field most appropriate for the course content.
- **Teaching Faculty:** Teaching faculty is defined as any faculty member, whether full-time or part-time, who teaches a course transcribed as institutional credit by Eastern Kentucky University. This includes full-time or part-time administrators who may occasionally teach.

Terminal Degree: The terminal degree is generally, for teaching purposes, the highest academic degree awarded in a field.

Responsibilities

- Faculty (full-time)
 - During the hiring process, provide official copies of all transcripts to the Dean's office.
 - Within two months of the completion of a semester, provide official copies of transcripts for all graduate coursework completed after employment commences.
 - Provide a **dated** copy of curriculum vitae to the College Dean prior to hire and every academic year thereafter.
 - Provide copies of all other relevant documentation of qualifications and keep updated as appropriate.
- Faculty (part-time)
 - During the hiring process, provide official copies of all transcripts to the Dean's office.
 - Within two months of the completion of a semester, provide official copies of transcripts for all graduate coursework completed after employment commences.
 - Provide a **dated** copy of curriculum vitae to the College Dean prior to hire and annually thereafter.
 - Provide copies of all other relevant documentation of qualifications and keep updated as appropriate.
- Department Chair
 - Ensure that all faculty hired to teach courses within his/her department meet the criteria outlined in this policy and the Faculty Credential and Qualifications Matrix.
 - Ensure that all faculty have provided the Dean's Office with the appropriate documentation at time of hire and thereafter as needed.
 - Submit completed Justifications for Faculty Not Meeting Minimum Academic Credentials form as needed.
 - Determine terminal degree(s) appropriate for coursework in the department, align with Promotion and Tenure policy and the Faculty Credentials and Qualifications Matrix, and provide justification to the Dean and the Provost as needed.

- College Dean
 - Ensure that departments are adhering to the policy criteria.
 - Maintain up-to-date and complete files on all teaching faculty within the college.
 - Provide information to the Provost when requested.
- Provost
 - Ensure that all teaching faculty are in compliance with this University policy and with accrediting standards.
 - Maintain a system for ongoing compliance.

Violations of the Policy

Failure to follow this policy will result in faculty being reassigned to an area that matches qualifications or not being rehired. Depending on the circumstance, a faculty member whose qualifications cannot be approved based on this policy may be immediately removed from the course, even if a semester has begun.

Regulation Adoption Review and Approval

Regulation Revised

DATE

April 13, 2026
October 18, 2024

ENTITY

President
University Counsel

ACTION

Approved
Editorial Revision

Regulation Issued

DATE

January 26, 2009
December 19, 2008
December 3, 2008
October 6, 2008

ENTITY

Board of Regents
President Whitlock
Provost Council
Faculty Senate

ACTION

Adopted
Approved
Approved
Approved