

Faculty Qualifications Policy

Effective date: April 2024

Faculty with Teaching Responsibilities (in compliance with [HLC guidelines](#))

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 or Missouri Institute of Mental Health faculty. This process must be followed for hiring of all teaching faculty – full and part-time and on-campus/off-campus. A Faculty Qualifications Form must be completed and submitted, along with transcripts, as part of the hiring process for all teaching faculty.

Minimum Qualifications for a Faculty Member

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.

- 1) Using academic credentials to qualify faculty:
 - a) 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.
 - i) 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.
 - b) 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.
 - c) 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.
 - d) Faculty teaching and supervising scholarly activity in terminal degree programs (e.g., DNP, 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.
 - e) 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.

- 2) 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:**
 - a) Faculty teaching bachelor's-level courses:
 - i) 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,
 - ii) 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.
 - b) Faculty teaching master's-level courses:
 - i) 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
 - ii) 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,
 - iii) 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.
 - c) Faculty teaching doctoral-level courses:
 - i) 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,
 - ii) 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.

For any cases that do not meet the requirements above, a detailed explanation of how the instructor meets the criteria, along with approval from the college dean and provost are required.

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 must be submitted prior to the hire for all faculty positions. Academic transcripts or other documents verifying credentials are submitted at

the point an offer is made if they have not been submitted earlier in the hiring process. Records of the academic credentials will be kept in the faculty member's personnel file.

- 3) For full-time faculty, the University hiring process protocol will be followed for selecting a qualified pool of candidates for interviews. This process includes the hiring committee 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 chair and/or hiring manager will ensure that candidates meet the Minimum Qualifications for a Faculty Member prior to hiring the selected candidate.
- 5) Any offer of employment to a prospective faculty member shall be made contingent on verification of an individual's claimed academic credentials. New faculty member's final degrees will be verified as part of the criminal background check (CBC) that is part of the standard hiring process. Should the verification not bear out the prospective faculty member's claim, any offer of employment to the individual will be withdrawn.
- 6) A Faculty Qualifications Form must be completed for every teaching faculty hire. The form is kept with the faculty's member's academic credentials in the faculty member's personnel file. It is the responsibility of the unit chair and hiring manager to ensure that this form is completed and submitted in a timely manner.
- 7) Faculty who are teaching graduate courses must be appointed to the Graduate Faculty in accordance with the UMSL Graduate School's Policies. According to this policy, qualified non-tenure track and part-time faculty must be approved by the Graduate School. Units hiring new NTT faculty or adjunct faculty who are teaching graduate courses should submit the Graduate Faculty nomination form on the graduate school's website.
- 8) The Chair and/or hiring manager are responsible for ensuring the qualifications of advanced UMSL graduate students who are appointed as graduate instructors. If a graduate instructor completes their degree and is hired as a part-time faculty member, their transcripts and a Faculty Qualifications Form must be submitted to their personnel file.
- 9) Adjunct instructors teaching in the Advanced Credit and Dual Enrollment Programs are also required to meet these qualifications. For information about how these qualifications are verified and approved, please contact the Director of the Advanced Credit Program.

Ensuring Staffing of Courses with Qualified Faculty

1. Documentation of faculty credentials is reviewed annually. For full-time faculty, credentials will be updated annually by each college. New credentials will be submitted whenever the faculty member indicates a change in their credentials when confirming their appointment.
2. Each semester, the unit chair 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.

Faculty without Teaching Responsibilities and Other Academic Positions

Hiring managers should also ascertain that new faculty without teaching responsibilities (for example librarians, archivists, and NTT research faculty), as well as other academic positions including postdoctoral fellows, postdoctoral associates, and clinical residents, also have the academic credentials specified in the job description.

Any offer of employment to a prospective faculty member shall be made contingent on verification of an individual's claimed academic credentials. The final degrees of new faculty without teaching responsibilities and other academic positions will be verified as part of the criminal background check (CBC) that is part of the standard hiring process. Should the verification not bear out the prospective faculty member's claim, any offer of employment to the individual will be withdrawn.