

FACULTY QUALIFICATIONS

POLICY**Part 1. Purpose**

Per [Minnesota State Board Policy 3.32 –Faculty Qualifications](#), and the related [Procedure 3.32.1 – College Faculty Qualifications](#), the purpose of this policy is “to ensure that qualified individuals perform faculty work in the colleges and universities of Minnesota State.

Part 2. Definitions**Assignment**

College credit-based courses to be taught and/or other academic or student services directed work assigned to be performed by college faculty.

College Faculty Member

An individual teaching credit-based courses, or a counselor or librarian at community, technical, and consolidated (two-year) colleges.

1. Unlimited Faculty

College faculty members employed by a college in unlimited full-time or unlimited part-time positions as defined in the master agreement between the board and the Minnesota State College Faculty.

2. Temporary Full-Time Faculty

College faculty members hired full-time for an academic year as defined in the master agreement between the board and the Minnesota State College Faculty.

3. Temporary Part-Time Faculty

College faculty members hired semester-by-semester on a temporary basis as defined in the master agreement between the board and the Minnesota State College Faculty.

4. Adjunct Faculty

College faculty members hired to teach credit-based courses totaling fewer than five (5) credits in a semester or three (3) credits or fewer in a summer session(s), and/or to perform an equivalent amount of non-teaching work as defined in the master agreement between the board and the Minnesota State College Faculty.

5. Others Who Teach Credit-Based Courses

For the purposes of this procedure only, individuals not holding a Minnesota State College Faculty position as defined in the Bureau of Mediation Services Case Numbers 01PTR88, 01PTR890 and 01PCE1410, who are assigned to teach college credit-based courses and are required to meet faculty qualifications for teaching described in this procedure.

Credential Field

A defined area of knowledge and skill that is specifically related to a program, service, or academic discipline, and for which minimum qualifications are established under this system procedure. College faculty members in unlimited positions must hold a credential field, which is granted to them upon verification that the system-established minimum qualifications for the field have been met.

Designated Assignment

A credit-based course or set of courses to be taught and/or other academic or student services-directed work to be assigned to temporary and adjunct faculty and others who do not hold a credential field.

FACULTY QUALIFICATIONS

Evaluation of Qualifications

The process for assessing an individual's education and experience to determine if minimum qualifications are met for individuals teaching credit-based courses and for counselors and librarians.

Higher Learning Commission (HLC)

One of six regional institutional accreditors in the United States. HLC accredits degree-granting post-secondary educational institutions in the North Central region, which includes Minnesota. The colleges and universities of Minnesota State are members of HLC.

Joint Committee on Credential Fields

A committee established under the master agreement between the board and the Minnesota State College Faculty that provides recommendations to the chancellor on credential fields and their respective minimum qualifications. Membership of the Joint Committee is established in accordance with the master agreement between the board and the Minnesota State College Faculty.

Minimum Qualifications

Minimum requirements used to evaluate the credentials of an individual considered for college faculty work that meet the guidance and assumed practices set forth by HLC.

Part 3. Applicability

This policy applies to:

- current faculty at two-year colleges,
- others assigned to perform college faculty work, and
- individuals offered employment as a college faculty member.

Part 4. Credential Fields and Minimum Qualifications Criteria

Credential fields are established to align with system-approved college programs and college-approved disciplines. Each credential field must have system-established minimum qualifications that include educational requirements and may also include related occupational experience, state and/or national industry licensure/certification, and other requirements as appropriate for each credential field. Exceptions to the educational criteria for certain credential fields may be approved by the chancellor upon recommendation of the Joint Committee on Credential Fields.

Subpart A. Liberal arts and sciences credential fields

The minimum qualifications for a credential field in the liberal arts and sciences are: A master's degree in the discipline or subfield or a master's degree in any field with a minimum of 18 graduate semester credits (27 graduate quarter credits) in the discipline or subfield.

Subpart B. Career, Technical, and Professional Credential Fields

The minimum qualifications for a credential field in career, technical, and professional programs are:

1. **Educational Requirement.** The minimum educational requirement for career, technical, and professional credential fields should be a bachelor's degree in the field and/or a combination of education or training as established by industry standards and current practice at peer colleges and universities. Combined minimum

FACULTY QUALIFICATIONS

qualifications are allowable even in instances where technical/occupational courses transfer. The educational requirement must be established at a level that accommodates all academic awards offered at two-year colleges aligned with a specific credential field.

2. **Occupational Experience Requirement.** The minimum occupational experience requirement for career, technical, and professional credential fields must be two full-time years (or equivalent) of verified, related, paid work experience in the specific credential field; more than two full-time years (or equivalent) may be required for a particular field. In order to ensure recent occupational experience in the field, one year of this work experience must be within the five years immediately preceding the date of application for the credential field. The recency requirement for occupational experience may be waived if the individual has two years of successful full-time (or equivalent) postsecondary teaching experience in the credential field within the last five years.
3. **Licensure or Certification Requirement.** Licensure, certification, or other credentials required or considered essential for practice in the industry directly related to the credential field must be incorporated into the minimum qualifications. (Example: The state/industry licensure requirement for the credential field of “Nursing, AD” is a Minnesota Registered Nurse license).
4. **Program Accreditation Requirement.** Standards for faculty qualifications established by state or national program accreditation bodies may be incorporated into the minimum qualifications.

Subpart C. Counselor and Librarian Credential Fields

The minimum qualifications for the credential fields of counselor and librarian/information studies are: a master’s degree in the relevant field.

History:

09.20.21 Proposed

11.17.21 Revised

FACULTY QUALIFICATIONS

PROCEDURES**Part 1. College Responsibilities for the Evaluation of Individual Qualifications****Subpart A. Evaluation at the Time of Hire**

Instructors shall complete online entry of their education, work experience and license/certification information that is relevant to their faculty role via the Employee Home application to be reviewed by the Ridgewater College Human Resources Department. The review process will require submission of an official college transcript(s), employment verifications of related occupational experience, state and/or national industry licensure/certification, and any other requirements outlined in the system-established minimum qualifications. The Director of Human Resources will be responsible for verifying the entry for the designated credential field and shall approve any change or addition of a credential field prior to a hiring offer being made.

Subpart B. Evaluation of Unlimited Faculty Upon Reassignment to Another Field

Faculty members in unlimited positions assigned available work outside their granted field(s) shall meet the system-established minimum qualifications for the assigned work. On a limited basis, assignments may be made when the college evaluation determines the faculty member is appropriately qualified as described in Part 7, Subpart D.

Part 2. Qualification Evaluation Process**Subpart A. System Office and College Responsibility for Evaluating Unlimited Faculty**

Each college shall complete the evaluation process prior to an offer of employment for an unlimited faculty position and for current unlimited faculty applying for additional field(s) subsequent to initial hire in unlimited positions. The system office maintains the responsibility for the evaluation of the teaching and learning requirement as described in Part 3.

1. The college shall review the individual's completed application, including official transcripts and verified related work experience, state and/or national industry licensure/certification, and other requirements, and determine if the applicant meets system-established minimum qualifications for the credential field.
2. An application for an initial or additional field must include the signature of the authorized college administrator verifying that there is employment in the field.
3. Notification that the individual does or does not meet the minimum qualifications for the field must be sent by the college to the applicant, the system office, and the Minnesota State College Faculty.
4. If a processing error results in the approval of a field for an individual who does not meet the system-established minimum qualifications for that field, the granting of that field is not valid.

Subpart B. College Responsibility for Evaluating Temporary Full-Time Faculty

1. Temporary full-time faculty shall meet the system-established minimum qualifications for the credential field(s) aligned with the position assigned with the exception of the teaching and learning requirement established in Part 3 of this procedure.
2. The college shall review the individual's completed application (including official transcripts, verified related occupational experience, state and/or national industry licensure/certification, and other requirements), and determine if the applicant meets the system-established minimum qualifications for the applicable field.

FACULTY QUALIFICATIONS

3. The college shall maintain documentation regarding the determination that an individual employed in a temporary full-time position meets the system-established minimum qualifications.

Subpart C. College Responsibility for Evaluating Temporary Part-Time and Adjunct Faculty, and Others Who Teach Credit-Based Courses as Defined in Part 2

1. Individuals assigned to perform faculty work shall meet the system-established minimum qualifications when the designated assignment aligns with an active credential field or shall meet the minimum qualifications as set forth in accordance with Part 4 for a designated assignment, except as allowed under the exception conditions specified in this subpart.
2. If the individual does not meet the system-established minimum qualifications, the college must determine if one of the exceptions apply as specified below:
 - a. Emergency staffing situations for which an individual may be hired for no more than two consecutive semesters.
 - i. illness, accident, or death of a faculty member during the term, resulting in a faculty member being unable to finish teaching the course;
 - ii. a failed search for a faculty position, if the position has been advertised at least twice;
 - iii. resignation of a faculty member immediately prior to start of a term;
 - iv. addition of course sections immediately prior to start of a term; or
 - v. immediate deployment in the armed services.
 - b. Pending Credentials: Individuals who are close to meeting the minimum qualifications may be hired for no more than two consecutive semesters with the understanding they will attain the minimum qualifications during this time period.
 - c. Special Expertise: An individual with special expertise may be hired to teach specialized courses in their field of expertise. There is no time limit on this exception.
 - d. Renowned Qualifications: An individual who has achieved exceptional status or recognition may be hired to teach appropriate courses in the field of recognition. There is no time limit on this exception.
 - e. Emerging Fields: An exception may be made in instances where the program area is so new that the educational preparation requirements and the occupational experience requirements are not yet clearly defined. This exception must terminate when the system minimum qualifications are established.
3. Faculty appointments under the exception conditions will be requested by the Vice President of Student Success, reviewed by the Director of Human Resources, and forwarded to the President for final approval prior to an offer of employment being made. Documentation of "exception" appointments and the applicable time limits will be maintained and monitored by the Human Resources Department.
4. The college shall maintain appropriate credentialing documentation on temporary part-time and adjunct faculty, and others who are assigned to teach credit-based college courses and for faculty who are assigned to perform work as counselors and librarians.

FACULTY QUALIFICATIONS

Subpart D. College Responsibility Regarding Assignment of Unlimited Faculty

Faculty members in unlimited positions may be assigned available work outside of their granted credential field(s) and shall meet the system-established minimum qualifications except as provided under the following conditions:

1. The college determines the faculty member possesses educational and/or occupational experience(s) appropriate to the assignment; and
2. The assignment is essential to meet unexpected and/or sudden staffing needs, to provide a full workload, or to meet other employment contract obligations; and
3. Written documentation providing the rationale for the assignment of the faculty member is on file at the college.

Part 3. Teaching and Learning Competency Requirement

College faculty members newly hired into unlimited positions, including counselors and librarians, shall successfully complete the teaching and learning competency requirement within six academic-year semesters from the date of hire or conversion into an unlimited position.

The teaching and learning competency requirement applies to faculty in unlimited positions including counselors and librarians.

1. Prior to being granted unlimited status, a faculty member shall successfully complete courses in the following content areas focused on the post-secondary student learning environment prior to being granted unlimited status:
 - a. course construction (credit course),
 - b. teaching/instructional methods (credit course),
 - c. student outcomes assessment/evaluation (credit course), and
 - d. philosophy of community and technical college education (credit or non-credit course).

Required course content must be specified in guidelines pursuant to this procedure.

2. The teaching and learning competency requirements in course construction, teaching/instructional methods, and student outcomes assessment/evaluation set forth at Part 8, A1-3 of this procedure must be waived for individuals who at the time of hire have:
 - a. a degree in education, or have documented evidence of successful completion of equivalent coursework in the specified teaching and learning content areas, or
 - b. three years of successful, full-time (or equivalent) secondary, postsecondary, industry, or trade apprenticeship teaching experience in the field for which they are being hired.
3. The teaching and learning competency requirement in Part 8, A4, philosophy of community and technical college education, must be waived for individuals who, at the time of hire, have documented evidence of successful completion of equivalent coursework.

Part 4. College Faculty Continuing Professional Development

Professional development includes continuing improvement in: teaching and learning skills and methods, discipline

FACULTY QUALIFICATIONS

and program content, student interactions, service to the college and the greater community, and personal growth related to the faculty member's employment responsibilities.

Each college shall establish consistent standards to implement the continuing development of faculty members. College faculty and administration shall work together to establish the standards on faculty professional development.

Part 5. Credential Field Status upon Employment Separation of Unlimited Faculty

1. A faculty member ceases to hold any credential field upon separation from employment, except in cases of layoff and through the four-year claiming period, or unless otherwise provided for in board policy and system procedure.
2. A faculty member who, subsequent to separation from employment, receives an offer of employment that requires a credential field, must be re-evaluated by the college to ensure the individual meets the system-established minimum qualifications in effect at the time of re-hire. This provision does not apply to faculty on layoff with recall rights or to faculty returning from approved unpaid leaves of absence.

Part 6. Accountability

Each college shall submit an annual report addressing their compliance with Board Policy 3.32 and System Procedure 3.32.1 in accordance with reporting requirements determined by the system office.

History:

09.26.12 Adopted

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