

Casper College

Academic Affairs

Faculty Credential Procedure

Purpose: This guidance sets forth the procedure the Office of Academic Affairs uses to assess a faculty¹ member's or applicant's credentials to teach college credit classes.

Background: The Higher Learning Commission (HLC) (2015) requires institutions to ensure faculty members have the credentials to provide oversight of the curriculum, establish expectations for student performance, and to know what students must learn to be successful in their given fields of study.

Casper College faculty members "teaching general education courses, or other non-occupational courses, hold a master's degree or higher in the discipline or subfield. 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, that faculty member should have completed a minimum of 18 graduate credit hours in the discipline or subfield in which they teach" (HLC, 2016).

While faculty member credentials are typically identified by academic degrees, other factors (e.g., tested experience, training, industry certification, professional licenses) may be considered in making faculty appointment decisions. At a minimum faculty members teaching in career, technical education college level certificate and associate degree programs should hold a bachelor's degree in the field and/or a combination of education, training, and tested experience.

The HLC (2016) guideline for faculty teaching dual enrollment classes (i.e., "courses taught at the high school for which students receive both high school credit and college credit") is "dual credit faculty members who have obtained a Master of Education degree, but not a master's degree in a discipline such as English, Communications, History, Mathematics, etc., may have preparation to satisfy HLC's expectations...the attainment of a Master of Education degree does not demonstrate a qualification to teach dual credit courses in a particular discipline unless it is demonstrated that the content of that faculty member's Master of Education degree is sufficiently related to the discipline of the dual credit course."

Implementation: When considering faculty credentials, college personnel employ the following processes:

1. Department Chairs and Program Directors, in association with their respective Academic Dean, define the faculty credential requirements required to teach specific college courses and disciplines. These requirements may include a combination of education, training, and tested experience. These requirements are reviewed on an annual basis and in turn approved by the Vice President of Academic Affairs.
2. Faculty position announcements will include a statement indicating the need for applicants to meet accreditation standards credential requirements to teach college credit classes.

¹ "guidelines apply to all faculty members whose primary responsibility is teaching, including part-time, adjunct, dual credit, temporary and/or non-tenure-track faculty" (Higher Learning Commission (March, 2016).

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3. A faculty member's, or potential faculty member's, credentials are initially reviewed by Department Chairs/Program Directors, or by an interview committee when hiring new faculty members, to determine the individual's qualification to teach specific college credit courses in keeping with the college's faculty credential requirements. The Department Chair/Program Director and/or interview committee then forwards a recommendation to the respective Academic Dean regarding the individual's ability to teach specific college courses in relation to the faculty credential requirement.
4. The Dean of the associated Academic School, in conjunction with the Department Chair/Program Director, reviews a faculty member or potential faculty member's qualification to teach college credit courses within a given discipline. This review is documented on a Faculty Qualification Review form (attached), which is signed by the Dean and Department Chair/Program Director and placed in the Academic Affairs file of current faculty members. For faculty applicants this form is completed before their first college employment contract is issued. In circumstances where teaching assignment or department expectations for qualifications change substantially, impacted faculty member's records will be reviewed for continued qualification to teach.
5. The Faculty Qualification Review Form serves as a recommendation to the Vice President of Academic Affairs regarding an individual's ability to teach specific college credit courses.
6. Following the recommendation of the Department Chair and Dean, the credentials of faculty members and potential faculty members are approved or disapproved by the Vice President of Academic Affairs.
7. All faculty instructor credentials including degree, discipline, and institution of transcript are posted to the Academic Affairs instructor directory web page in the first 10 days of each semester.
8. Current faculty members not holding minimum credentials to teach the college credit classes they are assigned will be offered the opportunity to develop an academic development plan to ensure they can meet the established credential standards for courses they teach. Specific assistance rendered to faculty members who chose to agree to an academic development plan will be determined on an individual basis. These plans will be developed by the Faculty Member, the associated Academic Dean, and the Vice President of Academic Affairs. These plans will include a mutually agreed upon timeline for meeting the established faculty credential requirements for the academic courses they teach. Plans will be reviewed for progress on an annual basis.

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References

Higher Learning Commission (October, 2015). *Determining qualified faculty: Guidelines for institutions and peer reviewers*. Chicago, IL. Author.

Higher Learning Commission (March, 2016). *Determining qualified faculty through HLC's criteria for accreditation and assumed practices*. Chicago, IL. Author.