


PROCEDURE MANUAL

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		Last Revision Date:	05-13-2025; 09-06-2018
		Effective Date:	02-12-2003
		Last Review Date:	05-13-2025; 12-01-2023; 01-03-2022
Section:	Instructional	Subject:	Faculty Credentials

PURPOSE


The College establishes and maintains a clear, consistent, and reasonable framework for determining faculty qualifications to ensure all faculty are qualified to teach the courses assigned to them. Faculty qualifications may be determined based on academic credentials, documented progress toward those credentials, equivalent professional experience, or a combination of these factors. These qualifications apply to all instructional staff, including those employed through dual credit partnerships or other third-party instructional arrangements. The College's credentialing practices align with the Higher Learning Commission's guidelines for institutional procedures and are regularly reviewed to ensure compliance with accreditation standards and support academic integrity.

PROCEDURE

1. Definitions

- 1.1 *Credential Field* is a defined area of knowledge and skill that is specifically related to a program, service, or academic discipline.
- 1.2 *Minimum Qualifications* are Arizona Western College's established minimum requirements used to evaluate the credentials of an individual considered for college faculty work. Minimum qualifications may include educational requirements, teaching competency, related occupational experience, state and/or national industry licensure/certification, or other requirements as appropriate for each credential field.
- 1.3 *College Faculty Credentialing* is the process for evaluating an individual's education and/or experience in accordance with established minimum qualifications for individuals teaching credit-based courses.
- 1.4 *Qualifying Documentation* are documents utilized to verify credentials and may include official college transcript(s), employment verification of related occupational experience, state and/or national industry licensure/certification, or any documents or supporting articles that demonstrate/establish minimum qualifications.
- 1.5 *Full-time Faculty* are individuals assigned to teach credit-based courses on a full-time basis in accordance with Procedure 601.1 Instructional Faculty Teaching Load.
- 1.6 *Adjunct or Part-time Faculty* are individuals assigned to teach credit-based courses on a part-time, semester by semester basis in accordance with Procedure 601.1 Instructional Faculty Teaching Load.
- 1.7 *Dual Credit Faculty* are individuals who are employed through partner school districts and are assigned to teach credit-based courses that qualify for college credit as well as K-12 credit.

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2. Verification of Credentials

- 2.1 All faculty must have the appropriate minimum qualifications related to the level and content of each course taught, which generally includes holding a degree or industry credential one level above the level of instruction. Faculty may qualify under section 4, *Exceptions*.
- 2.2 It is the responsibility of the hiring authority to ensure that minimum qualifications are met and document the qualifications of faculty members. Documentation of the faculty qualifications must be available for verification, either on file in Human Resources or entered within the appropriate employee designated database.
- 2.3 Human Resources is responsible for verifying minimum qualifications are met and that qualifying documentation is available within the employee's file.

3. Minimum Credential Requirements

3.1 Academic (Transfer)

- 3.1.1 Master's degree in the discipline, OR
- 3.1.2 Master's degree with 18 graduate hours in the discipline, OR
- 3.1.3 Master's degree in any discipline with three years of full-time work experience related to the course(s) taught (e.g. experience as a business manager would be eligible to teach a management course, but not all business or business adjacent courses), OR
- 3.1.4 Bachelor's degree with an industry recognized license or certification and three years of full-time work experience (e.g. Certified Professional Accountant (CPA) would be eligible to teach accounting), OR
- 3.1.5 Bachelor's degree with a current Arizona teaching certificate in the discipline and three full-time years teaching in the content area, OR
- 3.1.6 Qualify under section 4, *Exceptions*


3.2 Developmental (non-Transfer)

- 3.2.1 Same qualifications listed for Academic, OR
- 3.2.2 Bachelor's degree in the discipline

3.3 Career and Technical Education, Workforce, or Occupational Faculty

- 3.3.1 Same qualifications listed for Academic, OR
- 3.3.2 Bachelor's Degree, OR
- 3.3.3 Associate's degree, certificate, licensure at the highest level being taught, OR

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3.3.4 Occupational experience requirement for career, technical, and professional credential fields shall be three full-time years (or equivalent) of verified related paid work experience in the specific credential field. Documentation of work experience must demonstrate currency and relevance to the course content and student learning outcomes.

3.3.4.1 More than three full-time years (or equivalent) may be required for a particular field, AND

3.3.4.2 One year of this work experience shall be within the five years immediately preceding the date of application for the credential field, OR

3.3.4.3 Three years of full-time (or equivalent) post-secondary teaching experience in the credential field within the past five years.

3.3.5 State and/or national industry licensure/certification requirement.

3.3.5.1 Industry licensure/certification or other credentials required or considered essential for practice in the industry directly related to the credential field shall be incorporated into the minimum qualifications (e.g. Registered Nurse is an Arizona Registered Nurse license; law enforcement is Arizona POST certification).

3.3.6 Program accreditation requirements.

3.3.6.1 Requirements for faculty credentials established by state or national program accreditation bodies may be incorporated into the minimum qualifications.

4. Exceptions


4.1 Exceptions for hiring faculty who do not meet college established minimum qualifications can be made ONLY if one of the following applies:

4.1.1 Pending Credentials: Individuals who are within one semester of meeting the minimum qualifications may be hired for no more than two consecutive semesters under this exception.

4.1.2 Special Expertise: An individual with special expertise may be hired to teach specialized courses (e.g. CompTIA, Amazon Web Services, Yoga)

4.1.3 Renowned Qualifications: An individual who has achieved exceptional status or recognition may be hired to teach appropriate courses in the field of recognition (e.g. Poet Laureate, Michelin Star Chef, National Book Award).

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4.1.4 Emerging Fields: If the program area is so new that the educational preparation requirements and the occupational experience requirements are not yet clearly defined, an exception may be made. This exception shall terminate when the system minimum qualifications are established.

4.1.5 Tested Experience: In cases where faculty do not meet traditional academic qualifications, *tested experience* (outlined in HLC Assumed Practices) may be used to demonstrate competence. Tested experience refers to a breadth and depth of experience outside the classroom that establishes expertise equivalent to the degree typically expected. This includes documented, substantive professional experience that is directly relevant to the content and level of the course being taught.

4.2 Faculty appointments under Exceptions will be requested by the division dean, approved by the respective cabinet members and CHRO prior to an offer of employment being made.

4.3 It is the responsibility of the hiring authority to ensure that documentation and rationale that supports the Exception is available for verification, either on file in Human Resources or entered within the appropriate employee designated database.

4.4 Human Resources is responsible for verifying Exception conditions are met and that qualifying documentation is available within the employee's file.

4.5 Human Resources is responsible for monitoring any applicable time limits associated with point 4.1.1.

5. Professional Development Requirement

5.1 All faculty are required to complete the prescribed and approved professional development requirements and onboarding training within the first year of employment.

5.2 All faculty are required to complete professional development and training annually.