Competence and Qualifications of Instructional Personnel

Purpose: This policy is created to ensure that personnel who teach credit courses and noncredit degree program components at the University of West Florida are fully competent and well qualified in their teaching disciplines.

Competence and Qualifications: Individuals hired to teach credit courses and other components of degree programs must, under ordinary circumstances, hold, as a minimum, the following academic credentials.

For undergraduate courses and other bachelor’s degree components: A master’s degree in the teaching discipline or a master’s degree with 18 graduate semester hour credits in the teaching discipline.

For graduate courses and other graduate program degree components: An earned doctorate/terminal degree in the teaching discipline or in a doctorate in a related discipline.

It is recognized that occasions may arise when individuals may qualify for instructional duties on a basis other than standard academic credentials. In such cases it is the responsibility of the recommending body and the hiring authority to demonstrate and document that the individual being assigned instructional duties has the knowledge, creative/scholarly activity, service, and instructional capabilities expected of an individual who holds the standard academic credentials. Documentation of credentials used in lieu of standard academic credentials must be maintained in the individual’s official personnel file.

Applicability: This policy pertains to all individuals assigned instructional duties and who are officially responsible for assigning student grades. This includes, but is not limited to, regular line full- and part-time faculty, visiting faculty, adjuncts, and nonacademic staff assigned to occasional teaching.

In the event courses and/or activities are designed for a mixture of credit and noncredit students, the academic credential requirement pertaining to the credit course prevails.

In the event an instructional assignment includes both undergraduate and graduate credit courses the academic credential requirement for graduate courses prevails.

Graduate Teaching Assistants: Graduate teaching assistants who are listed as the instructor of record for undergraduate courses they teach must hold a bachelor’s degree and have successfully completed at least 18 graduate semester hour credits in the teaching discipline. Graduate teaching assistants may not teach graduate courses unless they hold an earned doctorate/terminal degree in the teaching discipline or a related discipline.
Source of Degrees: Degrees used to satisfy academic credential requirements must be from a U. S. regionally accredited institution or form a non-U. S. institution deemed to be equivalent to a U. S. regionally accredited institution.

Official Documentation of Degrees Held and Credits Earned: The official personnel files of individuals who teach credit courses and other components of degree programs must include official copies of transcripts documenting degrees earned and other credits used to demonstrate competence and qualification in the teaching discipline.

Noncredit Courses and Activities: Individuals who teach noncredit courses and other nondegree-related activities must hold academic credentials and/or have a record of successful experience in the field(s) about which they are assigned to teach. The official personnel files of individuals who teach non-credit courses and other nondegree-related activities must include appropriate documentation of competence and qualification in the teaching field.

Limitations: This policy on competence and qualifications of instructional personnel relates only to the instructional duties of such personnel. The minimum qualifications for hiring and promotion of personnel with faculty rank (e.g., lecturer, instructor, assistant professor, associate professor, professor, etc.) are set forth elsewhere.

Faculty

20. The institution employs competent faculty members qualified to accomplish the mission and goals of the institution. When determining acceptable qualifications of its faculty, an institution gives primary consideration to the highest earned degree in the discipline in accord with the guidelines listed below. The institution also considers competence, effectiveness, and capacity, including, as appropriate, undergraduate and graduate degrees, related work experiences in the field, professional licensure and certifications, honors and awards, continuous documented excellence in teaching, or other demonstrated competencies and achievements that contribute to effective teaching and student learning outcomes. For all cases, the institution is responsible for justifying and documenting the qualifications of all its faculty.

Credential Guidelines:

a. Faculty teaching general education courses at the undergraduate level: a doctoral or a master’s degree in the teaching discipline or a master’s degree with a concentration in the teaching discipline (a minimum of 18 graduate semester hours in the teaching discipline).
b. Faculty teaching associate degree courses designed for transfer to a baccalaureate degree: a doctoral or a master’s degree in the teaching discipline or a master's degree with a concentration in the teaching discipline (a minimum of 18 graduate semester hours in the teaching discipline).

c. Faculty teaching associate degree courses not designed for transfer to the baccalaureate degree: a baccalaureate degree in the teaching discipline, or an associate degree and demonstrated competencies in the teaching discipline.

d. Faculty teaching baccalaureate degree courses: a doctoral or a master’s degree in the teaching discipline or a master’s degree with a concentration in the teaching discipline (minimum of 18 graduate semester hours in the teaching discipline). At least 25 percent of the discipline course hours in each undergraduate major are taught by faculty members holding the terminal degree—usually the earned doctorate—in the discipline.

e. Faculty teaching graduate and post-baccalaureate course work: earned doctorate/terminal degree in the teaching discipline or a related discipline.

f. Graduate teaching assistants: master’s in the teaching discipline or 18 graduate semester hours in the teaching discipline, direct supervision by a faculty member experienced in the teaching discipline, regular in-service training, and planned and periodic evaluations.