



Date: July 11, 2016

To: Deans and Department Chairs (via deans-and-assistants list, department chairs list)

From: Sarah C. Mangelsdorf, Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs *SCM*

RE: Policy on Minimum Qualifications for Instructors – Effective Fall 2016

This spring the University Academic Planning Council (UAPC) approved a new Policy on Minimum Qualifications for Instructional Staff that will become effective Fall 2016.

As you make teaching assignments please keep this policy in mind. We will need to make some changes to our HR and class scheduling systems to support this new policy. Instructions about those changes will be sent to you in the coming months. We expect any needed changes to the infrastructure to support this policy will take some time and will be made in time for the Fall 2018 semester.

This policy sets a university-wide standard for the appointment of instructors in courses taught for academic credit at the UW-Madison. I extend my thanks to Michael Bernard-Donals, Vice Provost for Faculty and Staff, who provided leadership to the working group that developed the policy.

The full policy is available here: <https://kb.wisc.edu/vesta/page.php?id=47764>.

The March 2016 UAPC materials are posted at: <http://www.apir.wisc.edu/UAPC201516March.htm>.

Excerpt of Policy Language:

Qualifications for instructional staff will be judged primarily on the basis of earned degrees in a field or subject area relevant to the courses taught, obtained from academic institutions that are accredited by regional higher education associations and/or professional accrediting organizations, or the equivalent quality of university or college in countries outside the USA.

** As a default standard, all instructional staff (faculty and instructional academic staff) will have earned a terminal degree, or a degree at least one level higher than the degree for which the course to be taught can be counted. (For example, a Master's degree is required to teach a course that counts toward the bachelor's degree, and a Ph.D. is required for a course that counts towards a Master's degree. Exceptions may include cases where the norm in the discipline is otherwise (for example, J.D. holders teaching Ph.D. students in Law, or M.F.A. holders teaching Ph.D. students in the arts); or when the accreditation standards of the profession require otherwise.)*

** Instructors teaching in graduate programs should hold a terminal degree determined by the faculty to be appropriate to the discipline, and have a record of research, scholarship or achievement appropriate for the graduate program.*

** In some cases, instructional staff who do not possess the academic credentials described above may be appointed to teach courses, if they possess at least a bachelor's degree and are determined by the hiring authority to be otherwise qualified by possessing substantial tested experience. In these cases, permission to employ instructors in this category will be the purview of the department in which the courses are taught, subject to approval by the dean or dean's designee in the relevant school or college.*

The policy also includes this requirement: “Individuals who teach courses offered for UW-Madison credit must have instructional appointments consistent with that role during the term of instruction.” Implementing this policy will require some new appointment processes for individuals who serve as course instructors but who do not hold instructional appointments.

These standards do not apply to teaching assistants who are assumed to be under the supervision of an instructor who does have the appropriate qualifications.

This policy is consistent with requirements on Faculty Roles and Qualifications from the Higher Learning Commission (HLC, the University’s accrediting body) that will go into effect on July 1, 2017.

Again, we will distribute more information with specific instructions as we develop practices and tools that support this policy. We know that all faculty and the majority of instructors already meet standards as qualified instructors. There will be some new workload in departments and dean’s offices to approve individuals who are qualified by experience rather than by credentials, and to add instructional appointments for some course instructors who don’t otherwise have an instructional appointment.

If you have questions please contact Michael Bernard-Donals (michael.bernarddonals@wisc.edu) or Jocelyn Milner (jocelyn.milner@wisc.edu).

Copies:

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