

Verification of Faculty Credentials

Policy

Graduate Courses

It is the policy of Western Michigan University that faculty who teach at the graduate level shall possess the appropriate Graduate Faculty Status as determined by the WMU Graduate College.

For board appointed faculty with full graduate faculty status, this includes: a) holding an earned doctorate or terminal degree in an area relevant to the field of instruction; b) having the appropriate teaching and/or professional experience as determined by the department; and c) possessing a record of research or creative activity appropriate to the courses taught, as well as to the program and degree(s) offered.

For board appointed faculty with associate graduate faculty status, this includes: a) holding an earned doctorate or terminal degree in an area relevant to the field of instruction; and/or b) holding a master's degree as well as possessing the appropriate teaching and/or professional experience as determined by the department.

For non-board appointed faculty, this includes expertise in one's discipline by virtue of education, demonstrated professional experience, or licensure or certification—especially as specified by accreditation or approval agencies.

Doctoral teaching assistants must hold a master's degree or higher and have completed a minimum of 18 graduate-level credit hours in an area relevant to the field of instruction, be supervised by a qualified faculty member, and complete instructor training prior to teaching.

Undergraduate Courses

Furthermore, it is the policy of Western Michigan University that faculty teaching at the undergraduate level shall have: a) completed a doctoral or terminal degree and/or program of study in an area relevant to the field of instruction, with coursework aligned with: departmental expectations, professional best practices or specialized program accreditation; or b) hold a master's degree or higher with a minimum of 18 graduate-level credit hours in the discipline of instruction; or c) hold a bachelor's degree in the field of study with demonstrated professional experience and competency in the field of instruction as demonstrated by:

- licensure/certification in the field of instruction acceptable to accreditation or professional standards;
- extensive and documented professional development and or research in the discipline/subject; or,
- demonstrated professional experience and competency in the instructional areas.

Graduate teaching assistants must be supervised by a qualified faculty member, as well as complete instructor training prior to teaching.

For emergency substitute placement, in order to teach at the undergraduate level instructors must hold at minimum a bachelor's degree with specialized course work, along with licensure or certification and/or demonstrated professional expertise specific to the instructional area. To teach at the master's level, instructors must hold a master's degree or higher with specialized course work, along with licensure or certification, and/or demonstrated professional expertise specific to the instructional area. An emergency appointment shall not exceed one semester in length.

Guidance regarding these criteria is contained in the Higher Learning Commission document, "Determining Qualified Faculty Through HLC's Criteria for Accreditation and Assumed Practices." A copy of that document may be found at: <http://policy.hlcommission.org>

Scope

This policy applies to all instructors of record and to all those who hold academic rank and tenure. Thus, it applies to full-time and part-time faculty, graduate teaching assistants, affiliated faculty, adjunct faculty, visiting faculty, academic department chairs and directors, deans and associate deans, the provost and vice or associate-provosts. It also applies to university staff if assigned as an instructor of record either on an overload assignment or as part of their staff appointment. Emeriti faculty are not required to comply unless assigned as an instructor of record.

All academic degrees earned in the U.S. by WMU faculty shall have been awarded by regionally accredited institutions, and faculty shall provide documentation of their highest degree awarded. For WMU faculty whose degrees are earned abroad, official transcripts must be submitted to and evaluated by the designated staff in the Diether H. Haenicke Institute for Global Education (HIGE) to verify the authenticity of the academic documents and demonstrate their comparability with U.S. credentials.

As appropriate, departments will be responsible for articulating policies specific to their programs or courses.

Accountability

Upon Hire

Candidates for faculty positions are responsible for assuring that the official transcripts are submitted to the chair/director of the academic home department upon request. Candidates are also responsible for providing evidence to the department chair/director of licensure and/or certification in disciplines where such credentials are required. This documentation should be received no later than the return date of acceptance of the letter of offer. A candidate's failure to provide such documentation in a timely manner or falsification or misrepresentation of credentials will subject the appointment to discipline up to and including termination.

Department chairs/directors are responsible for extending offers of employment contingent upon receipt of the final official transcript and/or documentation of professional experience and additional licensure and/or certification. The department chair/director is responsible for forwarding the official transcripts of degrees awarded abroad to HIGE staff and following up on any concerns before forwarding the verification documents to the dean. Chairs/directors, and HIGE as appropriate, shall verify all faculty credentials no later than the effective date of employment.

The dean, or associate provost as relevant, is responsible for the verification and validation of all faculty credential requirements and for the accurate and timely completion of the Verification of Faculty Credential Form, which is to be forwarded to the Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. Copies of all official transcripts and P008 forms are to be uploaded into the designated electronic reporting system by the chair/director or faculty member.

Ongoing Compliance

The chair/director is responsible for overseeing the application of program-specific requirements that address minimum qualifications in order to ensure that only qualified faculty offer instruction in such programs. It is at the point of entering Instructor of Record (IOR) information and the corollary Faculty Credential Code into the Student Information System that the individual faculty member is verified by the chair/director as possessing the appropriate form of credential required to teach a respective course.

Relatedly, the chair/director will oversee the process by which faculty members upload their transcript information, copies of any credentials or licensures, as well as details of their demonstrated professional experience into an electronic record system managed by the University.

The provost or provost's designee is responsible for maintaining an electronic database of faculty credentials and auditing the records every three years.

Note: For those whose highest earned degree was awarded by WMU, an official transcript will not be required. The appropriate department will obtain degree verification from the Registrar's Office.

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