

Credentials and Qualifications for Faculty/Instructional Personnel Policy

Additional Clarifying Information

Clarification with respect to HLC Expectations per Current Faculty Members – The following clarification is from the Higher Learning Commission’s document, “Determining Qualified Faculty through HLC’s Criteria for Accreditation and Assumed Practices: Guidelines for Institutions and Peer Reviewers, March 2016, page 7.

“HLC requirements related to qualified faculty, including recent revisions to Assumed Practice B. 2., are in no way a mandate from HLC to terminate or no longer renew contracts with current faculty members. HLC expects that institutions will work with faculty who are otherwise performing well to ensure that they meet HLC’s requirements (whether through credentials or tested experience or a combination thereof). HLC also expects that institutions will honor existing contracts with individual faculty or collective bargaining units until such time as institutions have had an opportunity under the contract to renegotiate provisions that relate to faculty credentials if such revisions to the contract are necessary for the institution to meet HLC requirements. HLC recognizes that in many cases such renegotiation or revision may not be able to take place until the contract expires or at the contract’s next renewal date.”

Clarification per Dual Enrollment Instructor Qualifications – The following clarification is from the Higher Learning Commission’s document, “Determining Qualified Faculty through HLC’s Criteria for Accreditation and Assumed Practices: Guidelines for Institutions and Peer Reviewers,” March 2106, page 5.

“This requirement is not intended to discount or in any way diminish the experience that the high school teacher brings into a dual credit classroom. Such classroom experience alone, however lengthy or respected, is not a substitute for the content knowledge needed for college credit.

HLC recognizes that many high school teachers possess tested experience beyond their years in the classroom that may account for content knowledge for the dual credit courses they may teach. These teachers may have gained relevant experiences while working in other sectors or through professional development or other relevant experience that now informs their teaching. They may be active in professional organizations and learned societies through presentations and publications on topics relevant to the dual credit courses they may teach. In combination with other credentials and/or tested experience, they may be able to provide direct evidence of their students’ achievement on college-level tests that reflects a level of teaching and learning akin to a college classroom. However, evidence of students’ achievement, on its own, is not sufficient to demonstrate minimal qualification.

HLC also recognizes that 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 academic preparation to satisfy HLC’s expectations. In this context, the curricula of graduate degrees in the field of Education, when inclusive of graduate-level content in the discipline and methods courses that are specifically for the teaching of that discipline, satisfy HLC’s dual credit faculty expectation. In other words, 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.

Accredited institutions should monitor closely the earned credentials along with the tested experience of dual credit faculty with the understanding that allowances for tested experience may occur.”