Faculty and Instructional Academic Staff Qualifications Policy

(Approved by Faculty Senate on January 26, 2016)

BACKGROUND

The purpose of the faculty and instructional academic staff qualifications policy is to establish minimum standards of academic preparation, work experience, and/or professional credentials for faculty and instructional academic staff.

UW-Platteville has adopted the guiding principles of the Higher Learning Commission to define "qualified" faculty and instructional staff as those having the ability to (a) understand and convey the essentials of the discipline that a student should master at various course and program levels; (b) engage professionally with colleagues in determining the learning objectives for all graduates of a programs; and (c) demonstrate the full scope of knowledge, skills and dispositions appropriate to the credential awarded. (Higher Learning Commission, *HLC Guidelines*, October 2015)

POLICY

It is the policy of UW-Platteville that in order to teach any course at UW-Platteville the following criteria must be met:

Faculty

- Faculty must have a terminal degree appropriate to the discipline and relevant to the content they are teaching, with a minimum of a master's degree.
    - Probationary faculty without a terminal degree may be hired; however, progress toward the degree must be demonstrated annually and the degree must be conferred before the final year of the probationary process.
- Faculty teaching general education courses must hold a master's degree or higher in the discipline or subfield in which they are teaching.
    - If a faculty member holds a master's degree or higher in a discipline or subfield *other* than that in which he or she teaches, that faculty member should have completed a minimum of 18 graduate credit hours in the discipline or subfield in which he or she teaches.
- Faculty teaching graduate-level coursework should have a terminal degree appropriate to the content they are teaching.

Instructional Academic Staff

- Instructional academic staff must have a terminal degree relevant to the content they are teaching OR a degree relevant to the content they are teaching that is at least one level higher than the coursework in which they are providing instruction.

- Instructional academic staff teaching general education courses must hold a master's degree or higher in the discipline or subfield in which they are teaching.
    - If an instructional staff member holds a master's degree or higher in a discipline or subfield *other* than that in which he or she teaches, that staff member should have completed a minimum of 18 graduate credit hours in the discipline or subfield in which he or she teaches.
- Instructional academic staff teaching graduate-level coursework should have a terminal degree appropriate to the content they are teaching.

EXCEPTIONS

In instances where these criteria are not met, there is an exception process to hire faculty or instructional academic staff if they meet the following criteria for equivalent experience.

Undergraduate Instruction

A degree equivalent to the level they are teaching, plus 5 years of professional experience relevant to the content they are teaching, including tested / documented experience and advancement or recognition in the field. Evidence should include peer-reviewed publications, documented recognition of scholarly activity and/or in-depth knowledge specific to the field of study.

The exception process to hire a faculty member under these criteria happens at the point of hire. The Provost and Dean's authorization, as part of the regular recruitment process, will serve as the approval for the exception. For instructional academic staff, the exception process also happens at the point of hire using the same process and when deemed appropriate by the department chair.

Graduate Instruction

For individuals requesting to teach at the graduate level, in instances where the criterion of appropriate terminal degree is not met, the Graduate Council may consider additional information to determine the qualifications of the individual. These exceptions are considered at the time of request for Graduate Council recommendation to the Director of Graduate Studies for approval to teach graduate coursework. These items include but may not be limited to the following:

- Relevant experience of 10+ years, comprised of some combination of work-world and/or college-level teaching experience, with current experience being weighed more heavily than less recent experience
- Documented experience, progression, recognition, and/or advancement in the field
- Documented activities such as research, publications, or scholarly presentations
- Additional education (certificates, credit-bearing coursework, professional or industry-recognized certifications)