



STANDARDS FOR FACULTY QUALIFICATIONS

Policy Number: CU-AA-#60

GENERAL

The Higher Learning Commission (HLC), Concord University's accrediting organization has set forth expectations regarding the qualifications of faculty and the importance of faculty members having appropriate expertise in the subjects taught. Concord seeks to employ the best qualified faculty to help ensure that students reach their educational and developmental goals.

PURPOSE

This policy has been enacted to provide guidance for employment of the best qualified faculty at Concord University. Concord wishes to ensure that students have access to subject matter experts who can communicate knowledge in their subject to their students.

SCOPE

This policy is applicable to all faculty members whose primary responsibility is teaching, including full-time, part-time, adjunct, dual credit, temporary, and other faculty in all academic areas.

POLICY

It is the policy of Concord University to employ, and continue to employ, only competent teaching and research faculty who are qualified by virtue of education and continuing development and / or experience to accomplish the educational, scholarship and service mission of the university.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR IMPLEMENTATION

It is the responsibility of the Provost to implement this policy. The Provost will communicate the policy expectation to faculty, staff, and administrators serving on faculty search committees or evaluating faculty candidates for employment in regular or temporary positions.

IMPLEMENTATION

The Provost may develop administrative processes, procedures, or forms for administering this policy.

PROCESS

Establishing Qualifications

Concord utilizes a process to determine and verify credentials as the primary mechanism to ascertain faculty qualifications. Determination of qualifications of faculty is completed at the time of hire and reviewed periodically.

Subject Matter Expertise

The process for determining faculty qualifications or teaching credentials has evolved, with traditional qualifications being the general standard and tested experience emerging as an alternate qualification. Concord utilizes both methodologies to assess qualifications of instructors as subject matter experts (SME) in all academic areas.

Traditional Qualifications

When determining qualifications for undergraduate and graduate faculty, including dual-credit instructors, the university gives primary consideration to the highest degree earned in the discipline and requisite hours in the sub-field, which hours are typically 18 graduate hours or more. Instructors typically possess an academic degree relevant to what they are teaching. Faculty have a degree at least one level above the level at which they teach unless acceptable experience is established through alternative credentialing or extensive high-level practitioner experience.

Alternative SME Qualifications

In professional studies programs, high-level professional experience, outside the classroom in positions relevant to the discipline in which the faculty member would be teaching, may be used to determine alternate qualifications.

The value of using high-level professional experience to determine faculty qualifications depends upon the relevance of the experience both to the degree level and to the specific content of the course(s) for which the faculty member is responsible.

Beyond Credentials

Concord recognizes that knowledge and/or professional experience are not the only factors relevant to the employment of instructional faculty. Besides credentials, other skills and abilities need to be possessed by individuals who are employed to be effective teachers and scholars. These competencies include but are not limited to:

- The ability to communicate information both in written and oral form.
- The ability to utilize technology to communicate, instruct, etc.
- The ability to design curricula, develop and implement effective pedagogy, and appreciate the breadth of knowledge in quality undergraduate and graduate education.
- The ability to fulfill other faculty responsibilities, as required, such as conducting research, advising students, participating in co-curricular activities, and contributing to shared-governance.
- The ability to demonstrate current subject matter expertise through evidence of ongoing scholarly activity and professional development in the field.
- The ability to think beyond one's own discipline and traditional academic program, to determine what students should know, and to design curricula accordingly.
- The ability to determine what students should know to practice effectively.
- The ability to have a collegial working relationship with fellow faculty members.

Procedure for Evaluating Professional Experience

Before hiring, each faculty candidate must be evaluated to ensure quality and credentials.

The initial confidential evaluation of credentials will be completed by the appropriate Dean and / or Department Chair and forwarded to the Provost.

The Provost or designee will determine whether the candidate meets the university's qualification standard and is thus eligible for hire.

AMENDMENTS

This Policy may be amended to change names, links to information, and contact information without resorting to the rulemaking process.

Federal and State laws, rules and regulations change. Any portion of this policy and process document may be modified in practice to ensure the due process rights of the individuals involved are provided and to conform with any current Federal and State law, rules and regulations. Subject to the institution's rulemaking policy, the institution will change this policy to conform to the most current laws and regulations within a reasonable time of discovering the change.

REFERENCE / AUTHORITY

Higher Learning Commission Criterion 3. Teaching and learning: Quality, Resources, and Support, particularly Sections 3.C.1., and 3.C.2; Higher Learning Commission Guidelines for Determining Faculty Qualifications.

AUTHORITY FOR INTERPRETATION

The final authority for interpretation of this policy rests with the President or designee.

APPROVAL

Intent to Plan/ Revise Approved by the Board of Governors: April 20, 2021

Approved by the Board of Governors : June 15, 2021

Effective Date: June 15, 2021