# WEST VIRGINIA UNIVERSITY FACULTY QUALIFICATIONS ACCREDITATION POLICY

## WVU-Morgantown, All Additional Locations, and Dual Credit Sites

*Revised spring 2023*

All faculty who teach courses must have appropriate discipline-specific credentials or experience to qualify as experts in assigned course subjects. Faculty will provide appropriate documentation (vitae, official degree transcripts, certifications, or professional licenses) to document their qualification as content experts for all courses assigned to be taught.

MINIMUM FACULTY CREDENTIALS

These are the minimum standards for all WVU Faculty. Academic units may adopt more rigorous requirements as required by specialized accreditation.

Instructors of Record (IORs) teaching in applied associate degree programs should hold a bachelor’s degree in the field or a combination of education, training and tested experience equivalent to a bachelor’s degree. Training and tested experience for instruction of technical, occupational, and applied courses is particularly relevant in fields where the associate’s degree is the terminal degree, or where there is no recognized academic credential beyond a high school diploma. In these cases, appropriate qualifications such as professional certificates will be identified as appropriate. This may be applicable even in instances where technical, occupational, or applied courses may transfer into an applied bachelor’s degree program.

IORs teaching baccalaureate courses, including general education foundations (GEF), dual credit or other non-occupational courses, should hold at least a master’s degree or equivalent in the discipline. If an IOR holds at least a master’s degree or equivalent in the discipline other than that in which they are teaching, the IOR must have completed a minimum of 18 graduate credit hours in the respective discipline or subfield. If an IOR has not achieved 18 graduate credit hours in the discipline in which the IOR teaches, each instance must meet Exception Criteria and receive prior approval through the faculty governance process at the unit level to begin or continue teaching college courses. If a dual credit IOR teaching a baccalaureate-level, credit-generating course for high school students has obtained a Master of Education degree, but not a master’s degree in a discipline (English, History, Mathematics, etc.), the courses taken by the IOR must be equivalent to 18 credits in the discipline or subfield of the dual credit course. High school or post-secondary teaching experience will not be accepted as a substitute for the content knowledge needed for discipline-specific college courses, or for discipline-specific experience and does not qualify as tested experience, excepting education programs.

IORs teaching in a graduate program should hold the terminal degree determined by the discipline and have a record of research, scholarship, or achievement appropriate for the graduate program. Additionally, IORs guiding doctoral education should have a record of scholarship and preparation to teach at the doctoral level. Research and scholarship should be appropriate to the program and degree offered.

IORs teaching in disciplines that require licensure and/or certification are responsible to provide documentation of licensure and certification. It is the responsibility of an IOR to acquire and maintain discipline-required licensure(s)/certification(s). The institution may periodically request updated documents from its faculty members to maintain credentialing records.

All IORs must provide an official transcript with their relevant academic credential posted by the end of the first regular term after their appointment. For IORs hired who have not yet obtained the relevant credential but are in progress to do so, the initial appointment will revert to a visiting appointment for their first semester.  Evidence of completion of the relevant credential must be provided by the end of the first regular academic term after their appointment. If the relevant credential is not completed or if supporting evidence is not provided at the end of the first regular term after their appointment, their employment/appointment may not be renewed.

Academic degrees and certificates are the predominant bases for determining if an IOR is a Minimally Qualified Faculty Member. Specifically, degrees and certificates from institutions of higher education that are recognized either by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation or by the U.S. Department of Education or both, and professional licenses from national or state approved licensing boards provide evidence of appropriate credentialing. Credentials are used to validate appropriateness of specific course assignments for faculty IORs based on programs-of-study and subfields within their academic disciplines.

Tested experience, which is defined as breadth and depth of experience outside of the classroom in real-world situations relevant to the discipline, may be substituted as an equivalent to an earned credential or portions thereof, if approved through the appropriate faculty governance process at the unit level and documented in policy. The amount of experience that may be substituted for a particular academic credential should not be less than the amount of time it would typically take to earn that credential. Units that hire faculty through tested experience as their primary qualifications for instruction should have a policy that documents what kinds and amounts of experience will be considered for particular levels of instruction.

TEACHING AND LEARNING: QUALITY, RESOURCES, AND FACULTY SUPPORT

Current IORs not in compliance with this procedure are required to develop and submit a Professional Development Plan and timeline for achieving compliance to their chairs and/or deans for approval. This plan will be uploaded for inclusion in the annual update to their Digital Measures evaluation file, along with the required Professional Continuous Improvement Plan outlining goals designed to assure currency in their respective teaching disciplines, including the application of innovative discipline-based teaching methodologies and the assessment of student learning.

DESIGNATED REPOSITORY FOR FACULTY CREDENTIALS

West Virginia University’s colleges, departments, and programs shall assure that all faculty credentials are collected and retained at the appropriate unit level in the WVU Faculty Activity Reporting System, Digital Measures or its successor.

DEFINITIONS

Instructor of Record (IOR): WVU faculty member assigned to teach specific credit-generating course sections in WVU’s Student Information System and who is responsible for assigning grades for that section.

Minimally Qualified Faculty Member: IOR who a) engages professionally with colleagues regarding the learning objectives for program graduates; b) possesses the knowledge, skills, and dispositions appropriate to the credential awarded; c) possesses the ability to acquire, apply, and integrate broad learning and skills integral to academic programs; and d) demonstrates a commitment to educational achievement and improvement through ongoing assessment of student learning.