

North Dakota State University

Policy Manual

SECTION 309

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS FOR INSTRUCTIONAL FACULTY POLICY

SOURCE: NDSU President

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In order to ensure high quality teaching and learning in its curricula, this policy establishes the minimum standards for ensuring all instructors of record are qualified to teach credit-bearing NDSU courses. A faculty member can be qualified based on a combination of academic and other credentials. For description of Academic Appointments see [Policy 350.1](#). In general all instructors will be judged primarily on the basis of earned degrees in a field or subject area relevant to the courses taught, obtained from academic institutions that are accredited by regional higher education associations and/or professional accrediting organizations.
- 1.2 In particular cases, a faculty member may be deemed qualified based on other credentials appropriate for a given course, which may include, but not limited to, licensure or certification; honors, awards and other recognitions; relevant work or teaching experience in the field; research record; or graduate level course work.
- 1.3 For all cases academic units are responsible for documenting and justifying the qualifications of its instructional faculty prior to appointment.

2. GENERAL STANDARDS for INSTRUCTIONAL FACULTY QUALIFICATIONS

NDSU applies the following guidelines in establishing minimum credentials for teaching credit-bearing and developmental courses:

- 2.1 **Academic Qualifications.** Qualification to teach a given course is usually based on the faculty member's highest earned degree in the teaching discipline, with exceptions for areas where terminal degree is awarded at the Masters level and faculty possesses a doctorate in a related field.

For **undergraduate courses** (enrolling only baccalaureate students), faculty will be deemed academically qualified if they have earned a master's degree or higher in:

- the subject being taught;
- a closely related field, as defined by program/ academic department and accrediting body; or
- any discipline with at least eighteen (18) graduate credit hours in the subject being taught or a closely related field, as defined by the program/academic department.

For **general education** courses at the undergraduate level, faculty will be deemed academically qualified if they have earned:

- doctorate or master's degree in the teaching discipline; or
- master's degree with a concentration in the teaching discipline (a minimum of 18 graduate semester hours in the teaching discipline).

For **graduate courses** and for **cross listed undergraduate/ graduate courses** (400/600), faculty will be deemed academically qualified if they have earned a terminal degree in the subject being taught or in a closely related field as defined by program/ academic department and have a record of research, scholarship or achievement appropriate for graduate program.

- 2.2 **Tested Experience-based Qualifications.** If the academic qualifications articulated in 2.1 are not present, qualification to teach in a particular field must be based on other credentials which may include, but not limited to, licensure or certification; honors, awards and other recognitions; relevant work or teaching experience in the field; research record; or graduate level course work. Academic units must define minimum tested experience-based qualifications for their programs.

3. TO WHOM THIS POLICY APPLIES

This policy applies to all faculty members who teach courses, including tenured, tenure-track, non-tenure-track, part-time, visiting, and adjunct faculty. This policy does not apply to graduate teaching assistants who work under the direct supervision of a faculty member. All graduate students assigned as instructors of record should have either a master's in the same discipline or have satisfactorily completed at least 18 graduate credit hours in the same discipline to that of instruction. Graduate student instructors of record must receive appropriate training prior to instruction.

4. APPROVAL OF MINIMUM STANDARDS AND INSTRUCTIONAL FACULTY APPOINTMENTS

- 4.1 The academic units are responsible for reviewing and verifying the teaching qualifications for instructors of record, including graduate assistants who serve as instructor of record, adjuncts, visiting professors, and part-time academics, at the time of hire. Verification and validation must be conducted for each separate course taught. This process will occur prior to any instructor's initial appointment with the University, regardless of the mode of course delivery.
- 4.2 The academic units (chairs/heads/program directors working with program faculty) will define criteria (minimum academic and/or tested experience-based qualifications) that will be used to ensure that all individuals who are selected as instructional staff have the appropriate knowledge and expertise to teach courses for the program. Instructor of Record Qualifications determined by academic units for each program will be reviewed and approved through the regular faculty governance process. Approved Instructor of Record Qualifications will be kept on file at the department and college levels and consulted when appropriate. Any changes to the instructor of record qualification must be approved.
- 4.3 Faculty who are deemed qualified to teach based on credentials other than those approved academic and tested experience-based qualifications will be reviewed and approved on a case-by-case basis. Decisions to hire faculty under this provision will be relatively rare.

HISTORY:

New

April 26, 2017