8 December 2015

TO: University Academic Planning Council
FROM: Michael Bernard-Donals, Vice Provost for Faculty and Staff
RE: Draft policy on minimum qualifications of instructors

Attached, please find a draft policy on minimum qualifications of instructors, for discussion at the University Academic Planning Council.

In the fall of 2014, I met with Jocelyn Milner, Provost Mangelsdorf, Eden Inoway-Ronnie, and Steve Cramer to discuss the university’s next accreditation study and visit, scheduled for 2017-18 by the Higher Learning Commission. Specifically, because the HLC’s criteria for accreditation changed since our last accreditation in 2007-8, there are aspects of what we do as a university that will need to be identified clearly in our next round of accreditation. In 2014, you led a “gap analysis,” to understand where there might be gaps in our policies that would need to be addressed.

One of those gaps was a policy on the minimum qualifications for instructional staff (faculty and academic staff; it does not include graduate student teaching assistants), which we currently do not have. At the fall 2014 meeting, I was charged with drafting such a policy, and thinking through how the policy would be implemented. The HLC asks universities under its aegis to do two things related to the minimum qualifications of instructors: to establish criteria, and to make the credentials of university teaching staff available to students and the public.

In the spring of 2015, I asked the University Committee and the Academic Staff Executive Committee to recommend individuals to represent faculty and academic staff on a working group that would help create the draft proposal and understand its implementation. Those who were recommended — and who subsequently formed the ad hoc working group with which I worked — include Tom Broman (professor, History of Science) and Amy Wendt (professor, Electrical and Computer Engineering), who represent faculty; Scott Mellor (distinguished lecturer, Scandinavian Studies) and Elaine Klein (assistant dean, Letters and Science), who represent academic staff; and Michelle Young (academic planner, APIR) and Catharine DeRubeis (HR specialist, Office of Human Resources), ex officio members with deep knowledge of the logistical issues that would accompany any policy.

During the fall of 2015, I met with the working group every other week. During our meetings we discussed the HLC criteria and researched other HLC institutions’ minimum qualifications policies; after understanding the HLC’s criteria and our peers’ policies, we drafted what you see here. The working group continues to meet to understand the implications of the policy:
• the work required to input information on credentials for those not already in HRS
• the relation between the software systems — HRS, ISIS, Courseleaf — that will be used to track credential information and to make that information available to students and to the public
• the practices individual units will follow in ensuring instructional staff meet minimum qualifications criteria

On this latter point, the policy we have created meets HLC criteria; it changes current policy very little, though implementing it may change what information we collect and how we collect it. The basics of the policy are as follow:

• instructors should hold a degree at least one level higher than the one sought by their students (so, for example, one must hold an MA degree in order to teach BA-seeking students);
• one must hold an instructional title in order to teach;
• one may be alternatively qualified to teach in lieu of minimum degree requirements;
• units will be responsible for maintaining the minimum qualifications criteria in hiring decisions, and will be responsible for entering degree information at the point of hire.

Included in the materials along with the policy are two documents from the HLC: its criteria and its revised practices. The criteria this policy addresses are 3.C. 1-3; the practices the policy addresses are B.2. a. and b.
Policy on Minimum Qualifications for Instructional Staff
Revised draft 9/30/2015

Contents

Policy 1

Appendix A: Analysis of Qualifications of Instructional Staff 3

Appendix B: Implementation of Degree Tracking for Instructional Staff 9

Appendix C: Factors for Implementation 11

Appendix D: How Information About Instructional Staff Will Be Displayed to the Public 13

Objective: This policy aims to create a university-wide standard for the appointment of instructional staff in courses taught for academic credit at the UW-Madison. Such a standard will set common expectations for instructor qualifications at UW-Madison. In addition, it is being promulgated to meet the new accreditation standards adopted by the Higher Learning Commission in June 2015.

Applicability: This standard will apply to all UW-Madison staff who teach with appointments as faculty or instructional academic staff, including limited-term appointments, defined here collectively as “instructional staff”. It will not apply to graduate students who receive appointments as teaching assistants or as lecturers-SA (Student Assistant) and work under the direct supervision of a member of the faculty or instructional academic staff. In cases of instructors (including graduate student teaching assistants) who are supervised by faculty or qualified academic staff, the institution will note both supervisor and instructor of record.
Individuals who teach courses offered for UW-Madison credit must have instructional appointments consistent with that role during the term of instruction.

**General Standard:** Qualifications for instructional staff 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, or the equivalent quality of university or college in countries outside the USA. As a default standard, all instructional staff will have earned a degree at least one level higher than the degree for which the course to be taught can be counted. (For example, a Master’s degree is required to teach a course that counts toward the bachelor’s degree, and a Ph.D. is required for a course that counts towards a Master’s degree.) Instructors teaching in graduate programs should hold the terminal degree determined by the faculty to be appropriate to the discipline, and have a record of research, scholarship or achievement appropriate for the graduate program.

In some cases, instructional staff who do not possess the academic credentials described above can be appointed to teach courses, if they possess at least a bachelor’s degree and are determined by the hiring authority to be otherwise qualified by possessing substantial tested experience. In these cases, permission to employ instructors in this category will be the purview of the department in which the courses are taught, in consultation with the relevant school or college. Departments, in consultation with the relevant school/college, will define the minimum threshold of experience for alternative qualification, and will establish alternative processes for documenting alternative qualifications, evaluation instruction by, and otherwise supervising, these instructors.

Other factors that may be considered relevant to being “otherwise qualified” may include, but are not limited to:

- Substantial graduate-level academic coursework in the discipline
- Related research experience in industry and/or the private sector
- practical experience in the art, business, legal, or political sector
- clinical experience
- demonstrated competence or fluency in a language other than English and demonstrated ability to teach that language

It is the expectation of the institution that the decisions to hire instructors under this provision will be relatively rare, and made in light of providing students with the best possible learning experience.

These guidelines are informed by new accreditation standards adopted by the Higher Learning Commission in June 2015; they are promulgated to meet these standards.
APPENDIX A
Analysis of Qualifications of Instructional Faculty at UW-Madison
July 1, 2015

Prepared by: Margaret Harrigan, Office of Academic Planning and Institutional Research

A committee charged with preparing for the next Higher Learning Commission (HLC) accreditation review identified a gap in UW-Madison policies regarding appropriate qualifications of instructors. This report provides background information on the issue, including a description of the HLC requirements and information on the level of degrees held by instructors teaching courses in fall 2014.

Background:
Documentation of the academic credentials of our teaching faculty and staff is important for many reasons. In order to meet HLC accreditation standards, UW-Madison must be able to show that its classroom instructors are appropriately qualified. This is primarily demonstrated through educational credentials: instructors holding a terminal degree (or degree at least one level higher than the level at which they teach) in the discipline in which they teach.1

The Higher Learning Commission also requires that the “institution makes readily available to students and to the general public clear and complete information including: … a full list of its instructors and their academic credentials.”2 Although tenured and tenure-track faculty names are published in the university undergraduate and graduate catalogs, their degree information is not included. Other instructors, who are considered non-tenure-eligible faculty by HLC standards, are not listed in any regular way. Degree information is reported on departmental or individual web pages for many UW-Madison faculty and instructional staff but is not uniformly available.

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1 HLC 2015 Resource Guide: B.2. Faculty Roles and Qualifications:
a. Qualified faculty are identified primarily by credentials, but other factors may be considered in addition to the degrees earned. Instructors (excluding for this requirement teaching assistants enrolled in a graduate program and supervised by faculty) possess an academic degree relevant to what they are teaching and at least one level above the level at which they teach, except in programs for terminal degrees or when equivalent experience is established. In terminal degree programs, faculty members possess the same level of degree. When faculty members are employed based on equivalent experience, the institution defines a minimum threshold of experience and an evaluation process that is used in the appointment process. Faculty teaching general education courses, or other courses that transfer, typically hold a master’s degree or higher in the discipline or subfield. If a faculty member holds a master’s degree or higher in a discipline or subfield other than that in which he or she is teaching, that faculty member should have completed a minimum of 18 graduate credit hours in the discipline or subfield in which they teach.
b. Instructors teaching in graduate programs should hold the terminal degree determined by the discipline or have a record of research scholarship or achievement appropriate for the graduate program.
c. Instructors teaching at the doctoral level have a record of recognized scholarship, creative endeavor, or achievement in practice commensurate with doctoral expectations.

In addition to providing this data for accreditation purposes, UW-Madison is frequently asked for information on the number of faculty and highest degrees held for national surveys such as US News and World Report and QS World University rankings.

In order to verify that we are in compliance with the HLC requirements, we need to be able to document: who is teaching, the level (graduate or undergraduate) of the course content, the level of degrees held by instructor, and whether the field of the degree matches the content of the course.

For this analysis, we defined instructional staff as an individual who is designated the instructor of record for a course offered for credit. This information is maintained by the Office of the Registrar in the Integrated Student Information System (ISIS) and is used for multiple purposes, including Credits Follow the Instructor and other instructional workload reports. According to the Registrar’s Office, an instructor of record is responsible for submitting grades for a course. He or she is often involved in curriculum development and direct classroom or laboratory instruction, but this level of responsibility is not required to receive the instructor of record designation. More than one person may be assigned as an instructor of record for a given course. Both individual and group instruction courses are included in this analysis.

Currently, degree information (degree type, institution granting degree, and date awarded) is collected and stored in the university’s central human resources data base only for tenured and tenure-track faculty. The School of Medicine and Public Health collects and stores degree data for its Clinical Health Sciences (CHS) and Clinical faculty in its own database. For all other instructors, information on degrees held is stored in the office of the hiring unit and is not available centrally. Although the HLC defines “appropriately qualified” as holding a degree in the field in which the individual teaches, current database records do not keep track of the field of the degree. Thus we are unable to directly demonstrate evidence for this expectation.

In order to obtain information about degrees held by non-faculty instructors, the Office of Academic Planning and Institutional Research (APIR) administered a short web survey in January 2015. All instructional academic staff who were on the payroll in October 2014 and all staff who were instructors of record in ISIS in fall 2014 (other than faculty or graduate teaching assistants) were sent an email requesting them to fill out the survey. Tenured, tenure-track and emeritus faculty were not surveyed because we have a record of their highest degree. Graduate teaching assistants were also excluded because we assumed that they performed their teaching duties under the supervision of a faculty or instructional academic staff member and were therefore not subject to the HLC requirement. In addition, since they were enrolled in a graduate degree program we assumed that they did not already hold a terminal degree. The survey asked each person to identify the highest degree held, the year the degree was awarded, and the institution awarding the degree. An individual with more than one terminal degree was asked to report on each terminal degree held. The survey was closed in late February. Additional degree information was collected from UW-Madison records of degrees awarded since 1978 for instructors who had a UW-Madison degree but did not respond to the questionnaire.

3 Using faculty and School of Medicine and Public Health database records, survey responses, UW-Madison degree records, and review of UW-Madison departmental websites, degree information was found for 3,075 instructors of record, or 97% of non-graduate student instructors.
Analysis:
The chart below shows the distribution of the headcount of instructors of record by type of position held. As a reminder, the instructor of record is the person responsible for assigning grades for a course and is presumed to hold the responsibility for instruction. An individual who holds more than one position or teaches more than one course is only counted once. Of the 4,897 instructors of record for 2014 fall semester courses, 39.3% held faculty positions, 34.9% held graduate student teaching assistant or graduate student lecturer positions, and 22.5% held instructional academic staff positions.

Instructional academic staff titles are assigned to those staff whose duties and responsibilities are like the instructional responsibilities typical of faculty at UW-Madison and include titles such as clinical professor, adjunct professor, professor emeritus, professor (CHS), professor of military science, visiting professor, lecturer, faculty associate, and faculty assistant. An additional 161 instructors of record (3.3%) held other positions at UW-Madison, such as scientist, student services specialist, project assistant, or academic librarian. Note that for individuals in instructional academic staff titles, we might reasonably expect that they met qualifications to be an instructor of record based on qualifications at hiring. For the instructors of record in non-IAS positions, we have no basis for knowing whether they are qualified.

Table 1 shows the distribution of instructors of record by type of position held, highest degree held and whether teaching graduate or undergraduate courses. Over 75% of instructors of record held a master’s degree or higher academic credential. Excluding graduate student teaching assistants and lecturers (SA), over 97% of instructors held at least a master’s degree. A smaller proportion of instructors of record held a terminal degree, ranging from 100% of emeritus faculty to 55-56% of lecturers and faculty associates and 1% of graduate student assistants.

4 For this analysis, graduate student academic credentials were determined based on degrees awarded by UW-Madison prior to December 2014. A student who did not have a UW-Madison degree was assumed to have no degree higher than a bachelor’s. Individuals in other positions who were missing degree information (100 persons) were excluded from the percentage calculations.
Most instructors of graduate or professional level courses at UW-Madison are tenured or tenure-track faculty members – in fall 2014 over 77% of instructors of record teaching courses numbered 700 and above were tenured or tenure-track faculty. However, of the 460 non-faculty instructors of record teaching graduate-level courses, 29% did not have a terminal degree. Almost 50% of lecturers and faculty associates that were teaching graduate-level courses were without terminal degrees. Thirty-seven graduate student teaching assistants or lecturers (SA) were teaching graduate or professional-level courses – only one had a terminal degree.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Instructor</th>
<th>Total Headcount</th>
<th>% with Terminal Degree</th>
<th>% with Master’s or Terminal Degree</th>
<th>Number who Taught Undergrad Course w/o Masters Degree</th>
<th>% Taught Undergrad Course w/o Masters Degree</th>
<th>Number who Taught Grad/Prof’l Course w/o Terminal Degree</th>
<th>% Taught Grad/Prof’l Course w/o Terminal Degree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tenured and Tenure-Track Faculty</td>
<td>1925</td>
<td>98.5%</td>
<td>99.8%</td>
<td>1465</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>1607</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional Academic Staff</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHS Faculty</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>94.6%</td>
<td>97.8%</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clinical Faculty</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>75.1%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>19.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emeritus Faculty</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lecturers</td>
<td>351</td>
<td>56.2%</td>
<td>96.0%</td>
<td>301</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>45.7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Faculty Associates</td>
<td>244</td>
<td>55.1%</td>
<td>97.0%</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>53.7%</td>
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<td>Faculty Assistants</td>
<td>244</td>
<td>34.2%</td>
<td>71.1%</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>28.9%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
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<td>Other Instructional Academic Staff</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>80.0%</td>
<td>96.4%</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>11.9%</td>
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<td>Teaching Assistants/Lecturers (SA)</td>
<td>1708</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>35.4%</td>
<td>1679</td>
<td>64.7%</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>97.3%</td>
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<td>Other Instructors of Record</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>46.9%</td>
<td>79.2%</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>27.0%</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>21.6%</td>
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<td>ALL Instructors of Record</td>
<td>4897</td>
<td>55.7%</td>
<td>75.6%</td>
<td>4074</td>
<td>28.9%</td>
<td>2067</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
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</table>

Notes: Individuals who teach both undergraduate and graduate-level courses are counted once in the total headcount column and are reported in both the undergraduate column and graduate or professional column. Tenured and tenure track faculty includes faculty with zero-dollar or administrative appointments. Other instructional academic staff includes those within the following title series: adjunct faculty, visiting faculty, L/I faculty, preceptor, professor of military science, and instrumentation innovator-instruction. Other instructors of record includes those without an instructional academic staff or faculty or teaching assistant title who are acting as instructor of record in fall 2014. Examples of titles include: scientist, student services specialist, postdoctoral research associate, academic librarian, and graduate project assistant.

Terminal degree is comprised of those instructors with research doctorates, doctorates of professional practice, or Master of Fine Arts (MFA) degrees. Graduate or professional-level courses are defined as those with a course number of 700 or above. All other courses are defined as undergraduate-level. Graduate student academic credentials were determined based on degrees awarded by UW-Madison prior to December 2014. Graduate students without a UW-Madison degree were assumed to have no degree higher than a bachelor’s. Individuals in other positions who were missing degree information (100 persons) were excluded from the percentage calculations.
A lack of terminal degree does not necessarily mean that the individual is unqualified to teach at the college level. Equivalent experience may be considered in lieu of a degree. For example, an artist with a national or international reputation as a performer and teacher may be hired based on his or her experience. However, when instructional faculty members are employed based on equivalent experience, HLC guidelines require the institution to demonstrate policies in place that define a minimum threshold of experience and contain an evaluation method used in the appointment process.

**Summary and Recommendations:**
A committee charged with preparing for the next institutional accreditation review identified a gap in UW-Madison policies and data resources required to demonstrate appropriate qualifications of instructors. This report was prepared to evaluate the extent to which UW-Madison instructors currently meet the degree requirements contained in the HLC guidelines. Findings demonstrate that the majority of UW-Madison instructors of record had a master’s degree or a terminal degree. However, a significant number of instructors do not hold a terminal degree or degree at least one level higher than the level at which they teach: 117 teaching at the graduate level and 52 teaching at the undergraduate level do not meet this standard (not including graduate student assistants). In addition, we cannot currently verify whether the discipline area of the degrees held by instructors corresponds to the discipline area of the courses they are teaching. Although equivalent experience or other credentials may demonstrate appropriate qualifications for an instructor, UW-Madison does not currently have a policy that defines standards and processes for determining minimum instructor qualifications. In addition, UW-Madison does not collect the information for all instructors that would allow us to meet the requirements of making the instructional faculty and their qualifications known to students and the public.

The following list provides recommendations for action:
1. UW-Madison should establish formal policies that define minimum required instructor qualifications in accordance with HLC guidelines.
2. Instructor names and credentials should be readily available to the public for each course offered.
3. Central database should contain academic credentials including level and field of degree for all instructors, including non-faculty instructors of record.
4. Further analysis and discussion is recommended regarding whether the instructor of record as currently implemented in ISIS is adequate for identifying course instructors for accreditation, workload analysis, and other institutional purposes for which it is currently being used.
APPENDIX B
Implementation of Degree Tracking for Instructional Staff

Per the UW-Madison policy on Minimum Qualifications for Instructional Staff, “Departments, in consultation with the relevant school/college, will define the minimum threshold of experience for alternative qualification, and will establish alternative processes for documenting alternative qualifications, evaluation instruction by, and otherwise supervising, these instructors.”

To track this, each division must enter the degree information for all instructional staff into HRS at the time of hire. This data only needs to be entered once into the system and it remains as part of the Person Profile for the individual throughout their employment within the UW-System. Process for entering degree into HRS: https://kb.wisc.edu/hrs/page.php?id=16269

Who this applies to: All UW-Madison staff who teach with appointments as faculty or instructional academic staff, including limited-term appointments, defined in the policy collectively as “instructional staff”. It will not apply to graduate students who receive appointments as teaching assistants or as lecturers-SA (Student Assistant) and work under the direct supervision of a member of the faculty or instructional academic staff. In cases of instructors (including graduate student teaching assistants) who are supervised by faculty or qualified academic staff, the institution will note both supervisor and instructor of record.

Exceptions when Person Has Alternative Qualification
Other factors that may be considered relevant to being “otherwise qualified” may include, but are not limited to:

- Substantial graduate-level academic coursework in the discipline
- Related research experience in industry and/or the private sector
- Practical experience in the art, business, legal, or political sector
- Clinical experience
- Demonstrated competence or fluency in a language other than English and demonstrated ability to teach that language

To track this, each division must identify the alternative degree in HRS, or select the value of No Degree, and then document the alternative qualification in the Major field in the Person Profile (shown below).
Profile Type: PERSON

Add item details. Click OK to apply changes and return. Click Cancel to return. Click Apply and Add continue with adding additional items.

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APPENDIX C
Factors for Implementation

Who decides
Consistent with the expectation articulated in State Statute and in UW-Madison’s Faculty Policies and Procedures that “university faculty are responsible for teaching, research or other scholarly activity appropriate to the discipline, and public service” (FP&P 8.02 (A)), the determination of appropriate qualifications for delivery of instruction resides with the faculty body of the instructional unit, department or program responsible for course subject listings in which instruction is offered. Although some units may delegate some aspects of day-to-day administration of particular courses to program committees, subcommittees, or educational partners, responsibility for instruction resides with the faculty, and instructional staffing decisions are subject to review and approval by the responsible faculty.

Minimum expectation
Policy holds that qualified instructors hold a degree at an appropriate level and in a discipline relevant to the subject of the course to which they are assigned. “Relevant to” is a determination to be made by the faculty responsible for hiring, and may occasionally require consideration of changing or emerging trends in a discipline, an individual’s publication record, or other factors.

Occasionally, an individual who does not hold a degree at an appropriate level may still be considered qualified based on experience, such as:
- Substantial graduate-level academic coursework in the discipline
- Related research experience in industry and/or the private sector
- Practical experience in the art, business, legal, or political sector
- Relevant clinical experience
- Demonstrated competence or fluency in a language other than English and demonstrated ability to teach that language

When the decision is made
The determination that an individual’s qualifications are appropriate may be made at different moments in that person’s engagement with an instructional unit:

- A new employee hired for the first time into an instructional position. The hiring committee evaluates the individual’s c.v. during the search process, and when a decision is made, documents the highest degree attained.
- A currently employed instructor is assigned to teach particular courses. The unit responsible for making the assignment is presumed to reaffirm the individual’s qualification to teach by making the assignment.
- A current employee who is not in an instructional position is asked to take on an ad hoc or short term instructional position. The unit responsible for the appointment is expected to review and document the instructor’s qualifications. This is certified by appointing the individual in an instructional appointment, either as a proportion of the individual’s regular appointment, or as a zero-dollar appointment. The process should involve communication with the individual’s primary employer, and instructional appointments should be end-dated.
In each of the situations cited above, the hiring unit will utilize the HR System to document and track information about the employee, per the Degree Tracking Procedure.

Considerations

- Persistence of the determination of qualification. In some cases (e.g., hiring instructors into long-term instructional positions, where they will regularly teach an array of courses in a subject listing or listings) the decision about “qualification” should persist in the HR System, and the certification of that qualification is reinforced when these individuals are assigned to teach courses. In other cases (e.g., when short term staff are appointed to teach a single course), it should not. End-dating ad hoc/short term appointments should address this concern.

- Limitations on qualification. In some cases, staff hired may be qualified to teach courses offered at the undergraduate, but not graduate, level. The hiring unit is expected to evaluate individuals’ qualifications, document any limitations, and assign courses appropriately.

- Limitations on the currency of data in the tracking system. Not infrequently, staff hired to teach at the undergraduate level may later earn graduate degrees that qualify them to teach at a higher level. As the hiring units evaluate qualifications and assign instructional responsibilities, they will need to review and update information in the tracking system. For some large units, keeping up with frequent changes may be challenging.

- Limitations on access to the HR System to input information. Currently, a limited number of staff have access to the system; in broadening access, HR will need to be mindful that quality-control may be affected if data entry is delegated to the department-level. If access is not broadened, HR will need to be mindful of the increased workload for staff entering these data.

- Limitations on the timing of data entry. Generally, new hires need to have a record created before data can be entered into the record. This may affect the workflow for documenting qualifications.

- Quality control for instructors deemed to be “otherwise qualified.” Consistent with the expectation that all program faculty are engaged in monitoring the quality of instruction offered within its courses and programs, when a decision is made to hire an ad hoc instructor who is “otherwise qualified”, it seems particularly important for the hiring authority to articulate clearly a plan to ensure that the instructor is an effective teacher (e.g., assigning an instructional mentor; scheduling observation of instruction; providing feedback on syllabus, assignments, or teaching style, etc.)
APPENDIX D
How Information About Instructional Staff Will Be Displayed to the Public

A common feature of university catalogs is a listing of instructors. We can make this a requirement of our new catalog produced by CourseLeaf (CAT).

On an annual basis a list would be queried from HRS of all employees with a current appointment in an instructional title. The data queried would include:

- Last name
- First name
- Title
- Highest degree earned
  - Institution
  - Year

This information would be displayed as an alphabetical list in the catalog in a format similar to:

A

…

B

Badger, Bucky
Associate Professor of Kinesiology Ph.D., 1940, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Policy in Practice

- Each primary course section must have a qualified instructor attached. [primary section number is 001 - 299]

- All employees listed as an instructor on a credit bearing course at UW-Madison must have an instructional appointment (this includes $0 appointments).

- The employee’s supervisor will be notified of all $0 appointments.

- $0 appointments will be end dated.

- An employee’s highest earned degree will be entered in HRS at the time of their first appointment to an instructional position. The degree, year earned, institution and country will be entered.

- Degrees will not be verified.

- Degree information shall be retained in HRS after the expiration of the instructional appointment.
• Once degree information is entered it will be updated if an update is relevant (person has a masters, earns a PhD and wants to teach a graduate course).

• It is incumbent upon the department to determine whether the discipline of the degree is relevant to the course being taught.

• In disciplines where the PhD is not the terminal degree, the terminal degree appropriate to that field of study will be considered the highest degree and will be treated in the same manner as the PhD.

• An employee possessing a master’s degree may be deemed a qualified instructor if the faculty responsible for the course subject listing in question consider them qualified based on experience.

• The faculty responsible for the subject listing will make this determination prior to the employee’s first instructional staff appointment with their unit.

• The factors used to determine that an instructor is “otherwise qualified” will be documented in the “Majors” field on the Degree Tracking page in HRS.

• Once a person is deemed “otherwise qualified” they are eligible to receive an instructional appointment anywhere within the university.

• The “other qualifications” (repurposed Majors) field is entered once and is not updated.

• The “other qualifications” (repurposed Majors) field remains a part of the employee’s record indefinitely.
Job Codes to be included in the query of HRS

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Determining Qualified Faculty through HLC’s Criteria for Accreditation and Assumed Practices

Guidelines for Institutions and Peer Reviewers

These guidelines were updated October 1, 2015, due to the adoption of a policy revision to Assumed Practice B.2. by HLC’s Board of Trustees on June 26, 2015. This revision clarified HLC’s longstanding expectations regarding the qualifications of faculty and the importance of faculty members having appropriate expertise in the subjects they teach.

Introduction

The following information provides guidance to institutions and peer reviewers in determining and evaluating minimal faculty qualifications at institutions accredited by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC). These guidelines serve to amplify the Criteria for Accreditation and Assumed Practices that speak to the importance of institutions employing qualified faculty for the varied and essential roles faculty members perform. HLC’s requirements related to qualified faculty seek to ensure that students have access to faculty members who are experts in the subject matter they teach and who can communicate knowledge in that subject to their students. A qualified faculty member helps position students for success not only in a particular class, but in their academic programs and their careers after they have completed their program.

The following guidelines apply to all faculty members whose primary responsibility is teaching, including part-time, adjunct, dual credit, temporary and/or non-tenure-track faculty. Although some institutions place a heavy reliance on adjunct faculty, or give graduate teaching assistants the responsibility for instruction in many course sections, an institution committed to effective teaching and learning will be able to demonstrate consistent procedures and careful consideration of qualifications for all instructional faculty.

Background on HLC’s Qualified Faculty Requirements

During 2010-2011, HLC began developing new Criteria for Accreditation and Assumed Practices. Together, the Criteria for Accreditation and the Assumed Practices, both of which became effective in January 2013, define the quality standards that all member institutions must satisfy to achieve and maintain HLC accreditation.

In June 2015, HLC revised Assumed Practice B.2. to elevate academic quality by ensuring that faculty members who deliver college content are appropriately qualified to do so and to clarify HLC’s expectations. Also, the revisions to Assumed Practice B.2. reflected longstanding HLC expectations that had appeared in various written forms in previous years. Through this revision process, HLC supports its mission of assuring and advancing the quality of higher learning.

When HLC’s Board of Trustees approved the revisions to Assumed Practice B.2. in June 2015, it also extended the date of compliance to September 1, 2017, to allow institutions time to work through the details of the revised requirement. With these guidelines, HLC seeks to convey
both its expectations and timeline for compliance, along with strategies for institutional success in the best interest of key stakeholders, including students, parents, employers and other institutions of higher education.

**Relevant Criteria and Assumed Practices**

Criterion Three speaks to faculty qualifications, specifically Core Component 3.C, subcomponents 3.C.1., 3.C.2., and 3.C.4. Assumed Practice B.2.a. and B.2.b. are central to this topic and are presented below in revised form in accordance with the effective date of September 1, 2017.

**Criterion Three. Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support**

The institution provides high quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered.

Core Component 3.C. The institution has the faculty and staff needed for effective, high-quality programs and student services.

3.C.1. The institution has sufficient numbers and continuity of faculty members to carry out both the classroom and the non-classroom roles of faculty, including oversight of the curriculum and expectations for student performance; establishment of academic credentials for instructional staff; involvement in assessment of student learning.

3.C.2. All instructors are appropriately qualified, including those in dual credit, contractual, and consortial programs.

3.C.4. The institution has processes and resources for assuring that instructors are current in their disciplines and adept in their teaching roles; it supports their professional development.

**Assumed Practice B. Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support**

[Revised as written for the September 1, 2017 effective date.]

B.2. Faculty Roles and Qualifications

a. Qualified faculty members are identified primarily by credentials, but other factors, including but not limited to equivalent experience, may be considered by the institution in determining whether a faculty member is qualified. Instructors (excluding for this requirement teaching assistants enrolled in a graduate program and supervised by faculty) possess an academic degree relevant to what they are teaching and at least one level above the level at which they teach, except in programs for terminal degrees or when equivalent experience is established. In terminal degree programs, faculty members possess the same level of degree. When faculty members are employed based on equivalent experience, the institution defines a minimum threshold of experience and an evaluation process that is used in the appointment process. Faculty teaching general education courses, or other non-occupational courses, hold a master’s degree or higher in the discipline or subfield. If a faculty member holds a master's degree or higher in a discipline or subfield other than that in which he or she is teaching, that faculty member should have completed a minimum of 18 graduate credit hours in the discipline or subfield in which they teach.

b. Instructors teaching in graduate programs should hold the terminal degree determined by the discipline and have a record of research, scholarship or achievement appropriate for the graduate program.

**The Importance of Qualified Faculty**

Within a specific discipline or field of study in a collegiate environment, “the faculty and staff needed for effective, high-quality programs and student services,” as stated in Core Component 3.C., refers to a faculty member’s ability to understand and convey the essentials of the discipline that a student should master at various course and program levels. Beyond mere coverage of course material, qualified faculty should be able to engage professionally with colleagues in determining the learning objectives for all graduates of a program, as well as possess and demonstrate the full scope of knowledge, skills and dispositions appropriate to the credential awarded. More broadly, qualified faculty should know the learning objectives of the institution for all of its students. HLC expects that through the higher education curricula and learning contexts that faculty develop, the exercise of intellectual inquiry and the acquisition, application, and integration of broad learning and skills are integral to its educational programs. Qualified faculty should also be aware of whether and how much students learn through the ongoing collection and analysis
of appropriate data, because an institution should be able to demonstrate its commitment to educational achievement and improvement through ongoing assessment of student learning. It is important to note that none of these abilities are intended to substitute for content expertise or tested experience.

Note: See HLC’s Criteria 3 and 4 (specifically 3.B. and 4.B.) for more information on expectations regarding teaching and learning.

Quality Assurance Expectations in Determining Minimally Qualified Faculty

HLC expects that credentials will be the primary mechanism used by institutions to ascertain minimal faculty qualifications. Yet HLC recognizes that experience may be considered in determining faculty qualifications, as overviewed on page four.

Using Credentials as a Basis for Determining Minimally Qualified Faculty

Faculty credentials generally refer to the degrees faculty have earned that establish their credibility as scholars and their competence in the classroom. Common expectations for faculty credentials within the higher education community include the following.

• Faculty teaching in higher education institutions should have completed a program of study in the discipline or subfield in which they teach, and/or for which they develop curricula, with coursework at least one level above that of the courses being taught or developed. Successful completion of a coherent degree in a specific field enhances an instructor’s depth of subject matter knowledge.

• Faculty teaching in undergraduate programs should hold a degree at least one level above that of the program in which they are teaching. Those faculty members teaching general education courses, or other non-occupational courses (i.e., courses not designed to prepare people directly for a career), hold a master’s degree or higher in the discipline or subfield. If a faculty member holds a master’s degree or higher in a discipline or subfield other than that in which he or she is teaching, that faculty member should have completed a minimum of 18 graduate credit hours in the discipline or subfield in which they teach.

• Faculty teaching in career and technical education college-level certificate and associate’s degree programs should hold a bachelor’s degree in the field and/or a combination of education, training and tested experience. (Note: See Tested Experience section on page four.)

• Faculty teaching in graduate programs should hold the terminal degree determined by the discipline and have a record of research, scholarship or achievement appropriate for the graduate program.

• Faculty 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.

What is an Academic Subfield?

An academic subfield refers to components of the discipline in which the instruction is delivered. The focus, in this instance, is on the courses being taught and the appropriateness of faculty qualifications with reference to such courses. The underlying issue is whether a degree in the field or a focus in the specialization held by a faculty member appropriately matches, in accordance with the conventions of the academic field, the courses the faculty member would teach.

Examples:

In political science, the subfields include American politics, comparative politics, international relations, and so forth. The most basic introductory course is in the subfield of American politics, often called Introduction to American Politics, American National Government or American Politics. The instructor teaching this course would be expected to meet the qualifications for American politics.

In history, the two main subfields at the introductory level include American history and world civilization, again titled variously. The expectation is that the faculty will be qualified appropriately depending on whether the courses they teach are in American history or world civilization.

In business, the subfields include management, marketing, accounting, and finance. The introductory courses are often within these subfields, such as Principles of Accounting (frequently I and II), Principles of Marketing, and such. The faculty teaching these courses should have relevant qualifications in these areas.
Using Tested Experience as a Basis for Determining Minimally Qualified Faculty

Assumed Practice B.2 allows an institution to determine that a faculty member is qualified based on experience that the institution determines is equivalent to the degree it would otherwise require for a faculty position. This experience should be tested experience in that it includes a breadth and depth of experience outside of the classroom in real-world situations relevant to the discipline in which the faculty member would be teaching. An institution that intends to use tested experience as a basis for hiring faculty must have a well-defined policy and procedure for determining when such experience is sufficient to determine that the faculty member has the expertise necessary to teach students in that discipline.

The value of using tested experience to determine minimal faculty qualifications, as referenced in Assumed Practice B.2.a., depends upon the relevance of the experience both to the degree level and to the specific content of the courses for which the faculty member is responsible. In their policies on tested experience as a basis for hiring faculty members, institutions are encouraged to develop faculty hiring qualifications that outline a minimum threshold of experience and a system of evaluation which could include the skill sets, types of certifications or additional credentials, and experiences that would meet tested experience requirements for specific disciplines and programs. These stated qualifications would ensure consistency in hiring and provide transparency in hiring and human resources policies. The faculty hiring qualifications related to tested experience should be reviewed and approved through the faculty governance process at the institution.

Determining Minimally Qualified Faculty in the Context of Dual Credit

The subject of dual credit was the focus of HLC’s national study completed in 2012. This research entailed the analysis of dual credit activities across 48 states and revealed the dramatic expansion of dual credit offerings. Citing research conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics, HLC’s study reported that by 2010-2011 dual credit enrollments had reached 2.04 million students from 1.16 million in 2002-2003, an increase of 75 percent. Even though the study was a descriptive analysis of dual credit and therefore by design did not advocate a position, it did report on both the benefits and the drawbacks of dual credit programs and prompted the accrediting agency to address some critical concerns. Inadequate instructor qualification was listed among the principal concerns. (See Dual Credit for Institutions and Peer Reviewers for additional information.)

Against the backdrop of rapid expansion of dual credit programs and growing concerns over minimal faculty qualifications for teaching dual credit courses, HLC determined that institutions that award college credit by means of dual credit arrangements must assure the quality and integrity of such programs and their comparability to the same programs offered on the institution’s main campus or at the institution’s other locations. These expectations extend to minimally qualified dual credit faculty, as stated in Criterion Three (3.A., 3.C.2.) and Criterion Four (4.A.4.). Assumed Practice B.2. is also applicable and subject to review in relation to dual credit offerings.

The institution must assure that the faculty members teaching dual credit courses hold the same minimal qualifications as the faculty teaching on its own campus. 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. Yet it is critical that the content of the dual credit course match the complexity and scholarly rigor of the same course delivered to the student population on the college campus. With millions of high school students now earning college credit through dual credit programs, the advancement of higher education and the value of student learning rely extensively on the adequacy of faculty preparation and demonstrated qualifications among dual credit instructors.

What is Dual Credit?

Dual credit refers to courses taught to high school students at the high school for which the students receive both high school credit and college credit. These courses or programs are offered under a variety of names; HLC’s Criteria on “dual credit” apply to all of them as they involve the accredited institution’s responsibility for the quality of its offerings.
HLC’s Review of Faculty Qualifications Related to the Revised Assumed Practice

Beginning on September 1, 2017, the revised Assumed Practice B.2., in addition to the Criteria and Core Components, will be used to inform peer reviewers’ interpretation of HLC’s expectations around faculty qualifications. Prior to September 1, 2017, the Assumed Practice dealing with minimal faculty qualifications as currently in effect will apply to all institutions. Peer reviewers will not be referencing the revised Assumed Practice in any written report prepared for HLC or using the revised version of the Assumed Practice to evaluate the extent of any institution’s compliance with HLC’s requirements in this area until the effective date of the revised policy. As a result, no institution will be subject to consequences arising from concerns related to the extent of its compliance with the revised Assumed Practice prior to the effective date of September 1, 2017.

The following section highlights routine and specific circumstances under which the revised Assumed Practice, once effective, will influence the review of an institution. These descriptors are intentionally brief.

Routine Circumstances

Institutions hosting comprehensive evaluations
Institutions in good standing hosting routine comprehensive evaluations, whether on the Standard, AQIP or Open Pathway, need not write specifically to the Assumed Practice as a general rule. However, all institutions preparing for a comprehensive evaluation must write specifically to Core Component 3.C. Peer review teams conducting comprehensive evaluations may randomly select a sample of faculty members and request to see their personnel records (i.e., curriculum vitae and transcripts) in conjunction with the list of courses to which said faculty members are assigned. Peer reviewers may also legitimately probe what process the institution uses to determine that its faculty members are appropriately credentialed to teach the courses to which they are assigned. Likewise, reviewers may evaluate the institution’s policies and procedures for determining qualified faculty, particularly when equivalent experience is used as the measure of qualification.

Institutions subject to interim monitoring or on Notice related to Core Component 3.C.
As of September 1, 2017, those institutions identified as at-risk of non-compliance with Core Component 3.C. (i.e., placed on Notice) and those institutions subject to interim monitoring related to Core Component 3.C. should take the revised Assumed Practice on faculty qualifications into account in their Notice or Interim report (as applicable). This means that the revised Assumed Practice should inform the institution’s interpretation of sufficiency of faculty for purposes of writing to Core Component 3.C. and for determining whether faculty members are “appropriately qualified.” Although institutions on Notice or subject to monitoring on the basis of Core Component 3.C. must write explicitly to that Core Component prior to September 1, 2017, institutions on Notice or subject to interim monitoring on that basis need not write explicitly to the revised Assumed Practice unless explicitly called upon to do so by an action letter issued by the Board or the Institutional Actions Council, as applicable. Peer review processes for evaluating faculty qualifications will mirror those described in the preceding section.

Institutions that receive complaints related to faculty
After September 1, 2017, HLC may inquire about conformity with the revised Assumed Practice if a complaint is received about the credentials of an institution’s faculty members. Following HLC’s complaint protocol, this inquiry may take place even though the institution has not yet hosted a comprehensive evaluation after the revised Assumed Practice became effective. In conjunction with that review, HLC may ask to review the institution’s policy on faculty qualifications and the credentials of specific faculty members, as well as the courses they teach. The outcome of that complaint review may be a determination by HLC that the institution is not in conformity with the revised Assumed Practice, in which case HLC will follow the protocol explained on page six.

Special Circumstances

The following types of institutions are always expected to write explicitly to the Assumed Practice on Faculty Qualifications (whether as stated currently or as revised when
Institutions seeking accreditation or on a Show-Cause order always write explicitly to all Assumed Practices.

- Institutions under Special Monitoring related to Faculty Qualifications.
- Institutions out of compliance with Core Component 3.C.
- Institutions seeking accreditation.
- Institutions on a Show-Cause Order.

**Institutions Not in Conformity with the Revised Assumed Practice after September 1, 2017**

Should an institution be found not to be in conformity with the revised Assumed Practice B.2. after September 1, 2017, HLC will require the institution to file an interim report no more than three months after final HLC action. The interim report shall describe the institution’s plan to rectify the issue. Depending upon the extent and nature of the deficiency, the report will either demonstrate that the situation has been rectified, or it will indicate how the situation will be rectified within a period of no more than two years. The latter case will require additional follow-up in the form of an on-site evaluation to confirm the issue has been fully remedied and the institution is in full compliance. An institution determined by HLC to be acting in good faith to meet the revised Assumed Practice after September 1, 2017, will not be at risk of losing its accreditation solely related to its conformity with Assumed Practice B.2.

**Limitations on the Application of HLC Requirements Related to Qualified Faculty**

It is important that institutions review these limitations carefully in implementing HLC’s requirements related to qualified faculty:

- 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 fully expects that institutions will work with current faculty who are otherwise performing well to ensure that they meet HLC’s requirements, including its recently revised Assumed Practice. 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’s 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.

- As a part of its ongoing evaluation of faculty, institutions may determine that there need to be changes in faculty hiring requirements pursuant to best (and emerging) practices in higher education related to faculty (not necessarily related to HLC’s requirements) and to new or existing institutional policies in this regard. Institutions may also determine that certain faculty members have not performed well according to the expectations of the institution related to faculty performance and should not be retained. Such decisions are within the institution’s purview. They should not be handled differently than they would have been in the past, prior to the promulgation of the revised Assumed Practice B.2. Under no circumstances should institutions use HLC’s requirements, including the revised Assumed Practice B.2., as a pretext to eliminate faculty members who have not performed well or do not meet institutional hiring requirements for faculty members and would otherwise have not been retained for these reasons.

- As stated throughout this document, the implementation date for the revised Assumed Practice B.2. is September 1, 2017. No institution will be held accountable for compliance with the revised Assumed Practice in any HLC evaluation prior to that date. Institutions are free to set a more aggressive timetable for compliance with this revised requirement, but must make clear to the institutional community that the more aggressive timetable is their timetable, not that of HLC.

- These requirements, including recent changes to Assumed Practice B.2., in no way apply to staff members at accredited institutions; they apply to faculty only. To understand HLC’s requirements related to staff members, institutions should review subcomponent 3.C.6, that states “staff members providing student support services, such as tutoring, financial aid advising, academic advising, and co-
curricular activities, are appropriately qualified, trained, and supported in their professional development.” HLC has no further requirements identifying what the appropriate qualifications are for staff members; rather, it is up to each accredited institution to determine what appropriate qualifications are for such personnel.

Summary

A fundamental factor in quality assurance, the central tenet of HLC’s mission, is having appropriately qualified faculty for the instructional and other roles faculty perform. It is critical that faculty possess suitable credentials with currency in their respective disciplines for the courses or programs in which they teach for the sake of students, so that they are exposed to pertinent knowledge and skills not only while in college but also for their success later in life; for the parents who invest a great deal in them; for other institutions of higher education where those students may transfer; and for the society in general. In these guidelines, HLC has set forth minimal expectations for the faculty at accredited institutions in order to comply with the relevant Criteria for Accreditation and Assumed Practices.

January 8, 2016
To: UAPC members
From: Jocelyn Milner
The additional attachment on assumed practices changes is a lengthy documentation of the HLC Boards transactions around approving modified language. Thus, we have not included it in the packet. If you would like to see this document please contact Sarah Kuba (sarah.kuba@wisc.edu).