

Policy: Credentials for University Instructors

Effective Date: _____

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines and criteria for the credentials required for university instructors. This policy aims to ensure that instructors possess the necessary qualifications and expertise to deliver high-quality education and meet the standards set by the university.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all university instructors, including full-time faculty, part-time instructors, adjunct faculty members, and dual enrollment instructors.

3. Policy Statement

3.1 Minimum Qualifications

University instructors must hold a minimum of a master's degree in the relevant field or discipline from an accredited institution. The University adheres to the credentials and standards for programs that hold specialized accreditation (ACBSP, ABET, etc.). Accredited program standards can be found [here](#).

- a) Faculty teaching general education courses at the undergraduate level: 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).
- b) Faculty teaching associate degree courses: a minimum of a bachelor's degree in the teaching discipline.
- c) Faculty teaching baccalaureate courses: doctorate or master's degree in the teaching discipline or master's degree with a concentration in the teaching discipline (minimum of 18 graduate semester hours in the teaching discipline).
- d) Faculty teaching graduate and post-baccalaureate course work: earned doctorate/terminal degree in the teaching discipline or a related discipline (unless otherwise specified by the programmatic accrediting body).

3.2 Credential Verification

The university will establish processes to verify the credentials of instructors at the time of hiring. This may involve requesting official transcripts, validating degrees with the issuing institutions, contacting references, and conducting background checks as necessary.

4. Exceptions and Waivers

Unless stated otherwise by programmatic accreditation minimum standards, in exceptional cases where an individual does not meet the minimum qualifications or terminal degree requirement, the department or academic unit may request an exception or waiver utilizing tested experience. Such requests must be accompanied by a detailed justification outlining the candidate's exceptional qualifications, experience, or expertise that demonstrate their ability to effectively teach the course.

College/School/Program	Minimum Credentials	Special Competence/Tested Experience	The Higher Learning Commission
College of Health Sciences	**Faculty teaching Health Education classes must have a Masters of Science in a health-related field such as Nursing.		
AS Nursing	Masters of Science in Nursing or Bachelor of Science in Nursing with 10 years experience with completion of Masters of Science in Nursing within 2 years	NO	Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing
AS Rad Tech	Masters of Science or Bachelor of Science in Rad Tech with completion of Masters of Science within 2 years	NO	Bluefield State University - JRCERT
Bachelor of Science in Nursing	Masters of Science in Nursing	NO	CCNE Accreditation
Imaging Science	Masters in the subject area, a master's plus 18 graduate hours in the subject area or tested experience	YES	
Respiratory Therapy	Masters Degree, NBRC RRT, State License, 2 years teaching experience	NO	
College of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM)	Masters in the subject area, a master's plus 18 graduate hours in the subject area or tested experience	YES--for programs that do not fall within the scope of ABET	ABET
College of Arts, Education, and Social Sciences	Masters in the subject area, a master's plus 18 graduate hours in the subject area or tested experience	YES	
School of Education	An earned doctorate in education or a closely related field. (ABD candidates will be considered.)	NO	Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation
School of Criminal Justice	Master's degree in criminal justice, criminology, or closely related field is required	YES	
College of Business			

Bachelor of Science, Business Administration	Master’s Degree in teaching field; MBA—The MBA is the qualified master's degree in the teaching field for business management and marketing degrees. The MBA is also the master’s qualification to teach any introductory or principle level business unit courses (for example, entry level accounting, economics, software applications, finance, intro to computers, etc.); MED or MBE —The Master's in Education with a concentration in a business discipline is the master's degree in the teaching field for office administration; Out-of-field master’s degree with 15 semester/22 quarter graduate credit hours or equivalent of courses in field	NO	Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs
Bachelor of Science, Health Service Management	Masters in the subject area, a master's plus 18 graduate hours in the subject area or tested experience	YES	
BOLD--Leadership	Masters in the subject area, a master's plus 18 graduate hours in the subject area or tested experience	YES	