

Faculty Credential Policy



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Approved by: Deans Council and Department Chairs

Policy Owner: Academic Affairs

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Faculty Credential Policy

A. Introduction

The Office of Academic Affairs is dedicated to ensuring that all members of its faculty uphold the recommendations established by The Higher Learning Commission (HLC) and Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education (OSRHE). Oklahoma Panhandle State University's policy adheres to the HLC recommendations while abiding by the policy of the OSRHE.

B. Requirements

Faculty member credentials must be appropriate to assigned duties and disciplines, including level of instruction (Baccalaureate, AA, AS, AAS, Certificate, remedial, etc.).

1. Faculty must hold degrees, certifications, and licenses from institutions accredited by agencies recognized by the U.S. Department of Education such as the Higher Learning Commission or from institutions with comparable status, certification, or recognition in other countries.
2. Faculty members teaching general education core courses are expected to hold at least a master's degree with 18 graduate hours in the teaching field. (A limited number of faculty may hold equivalent documented experience to meet educational qualifications.) See section, Evaluation of Credentials
3. Typically, faculty members teaching remedial/developmental education courses hold a master's degree but must hold a bachelor's degree in the teaching field.
4. Faculty members teaching in occupational skills areas (AAS) must hold at least a bachelor's degree or appropriate industry-related licensure/certification.

C. Full-Time and Part-Time Guidelines

The goal of Oklahoma Panhandle State University will be to maintain the same guidelines for both full-time and part-time faculty members.

D. Qualifications

Oklahoma Panhandle State University strives to maintain good practices in determining qualified faculty and as a policy will establish periodic reviews to ensure the minimum qualifications and expectations of all full-time and part-time faculty teaching in all disciplines. An "official" copy of academic transcripts bearing the seal of the university or university should be provided to the Human Resources Office. While the official certified transcript will be housed in the employee's official personnel file in the Human Resources Office, a copy will also be maintained in the Office of the Vice President of Academic Affairs.

Qualifications of faculty teaching courses leading to a degree require a master's degree in the discipline or related field with a minimum of 18 graduate credits in the subject area; candidates pursuing a Master's Degree may be considered with the understanding that the degree must be completed expeditiously. The failure of an individual faculty member to maintain satisfactory progress on his or her qualification plan will be considered adequate cause for the university to place the faculty member on probationary status or dismiss him or her from employment.

Full-time and part-time faculty who are working on completing their qualifications must submit updated transcripts at the beginning of each semester. The appropriate Dean is responsible for the evaluation of appropriate academic progress.

All references to degrees and semester hours in this and other University documents presume that credit comes from institutions that are fully accredited at the graduate level by one of the recognized regional associations or by another federally recognized specialized accrediting body. Degrees and courses from foreign institutions must come from institutions generally acknowledged to meet requirements equivalent to regional accreditation in the U.S.A.

Faculty with advanced degrees from foreign institutions must have their credentials evaluated and translated by a National Association of Credential Evaluation Services (NACES)-approved organization prior to beginning work with OPSU. Original documentation must be submitted prior to hire date.

E. Evaluation of Credentials

1. Associate of Arts and Associate of Science Degree Programs (Academic Transfer Intention)

Required Qualifications:

Full-time and part-time faculty members are expected to hold a degree at least one level above that of the program in which they are teaching. For courses taught as part of an baccalaureate degree, having the expectation of transfer to universities the generally accepted minimum faculty credential consists of a Master's degree with a major in the teaching field (or a very closely related subject) or a Master's degree in a related field along with at least 18 graduate hours in the specific teaching field (or a very closely related field).

Alternative Qualifications:

- a. When qualification is based on factors other than generally accepted graduate degree and hours credentialing, the faculty member must be able to make and document, and the Vice President for Academic Affairs must accept, a prima facie case that the alternate qualification would be persuasive to external peers. Examples might include high-level specialized training, advanced industry certification, professional licensing, publication in-field, workshops/seminars in field, recognition by in-field organizations, etc.
- b. Degrees in Education:
As a general rule, degrees and course in education (EDUC or equivalent) are considered to be in a "related field" rather than in the major field. A Master's Degree in Education fields contributing to effective instruction (ie. Educational technology) will count toward 6 of the required 18+ hours in the field.
- c. Exceptions:

Cases such as child development or physical education or business education in which education is the field.

Education courses that focus on a specific discipline may be considered in-field for the major if the course description/syllabus clearly documents that the principal focus of the course was on subject matter rather than pedagogy. Interdisciplinary Courses such as general humanities necessarily require faculty qualifications that reflect the multi-disciplinary foundations of the particular course and must be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

Courses with a narrow focus such as art history or music appreciation are normally considered to be subject matter courses requiring subject expertise not broad interdisciplinary courses even if they carry the HUMN prefix. On the other hand, broader-based HUMN courses and other interdisciplinary course may be taught by interested, qualified, and prepared faculty members with a wide range of formal credentials.

d. Closely Related Fields:

The determination of how closely related subjects must be in order to qualify faculty is a subjective one. Generally accepted academic practice and the informed opinion of qualified expert peers should be brought to bear in the determination. Explanation of qualification based on closely related field should be included in the faculty member's file. Oklahoma Panhandle State University can utilize "Tested Experience" where appropriate. Oklahoma Panhandle State University will strive to utilize tested experience in addition to a strong and appropriate educational background. "Tested Experience" can be demonstrated through application of professional experiences along with professional certifications that correspond with the required minimum formal education. "Tested Experience" may be figured at a rate corresponding to 1.5 hours of graduate credit per 1 year of professional work experience (as determined by academic dean) (i.e. 4 years of full-time job experience counts as 6 graduate credit hours).