CMU
CENTRAL MICHIGAN
UNIVERSITY

Title/Subject: **TEACHING FACULTY QUALIFICATIONS POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

Applies to: ☒ faculty   ☐ staff   ☐ students   ☐ student employees   ☐ visitors   ☐ contractors

Effective Date of This Revision: February 15, 2017

Contact for More Information: Provost's Office

☐ Board Policy   ☒ Administrative Policy   ☒ Procedure   ☐ Guideline

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BACKGROUND:

Central Michigan University ensures that all instructional faculty and faculty responsible for developing curriculum possess the academic preparation, training, and experience to teach in an academic setting, meet or exceed the minimum requirements of accrediting bodies, and accomplish the mission of the institution.
When determining qualifications of its teaching faculty, Central Michigan University considers, where appropriate, undergraduate and graduate degrees, related work experiences, professional licenses and certifications, or other demonstrated competencies and achievements that contribute to effective teaching. Guidance regarding these criteria is contained in the Higher Learning Commission document entitled "Determining Qualified Faculty Through HLC's Criteria for Accreditation and Assumed Practices."

PURPOSE:

CMU wishes to establish an administrative policy that aligns with the criteria outlined in the Higher Learning Commission's document noted above.

PROCEDURE:

   A. **Academic Qualifications**

   When determining acceptable qualifications of its teaching faculty, Central Michigan University gives primary consideration to the highest degree earned in the discipline. Degrees earned are only acceptable if awarded by an institution that holds accreditation from one of the regional or national accrediting agencies recognized by the U.S. Department of Education. Foreign credentials must meet standards established by the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers.
   Faculty should have completed a program of study in the discipline or subfield (as applicable) 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 as described below. An academic subfield refers to a component of the discipline in which the instruction is delivered (e.g., American history, cellular biology, real estate). The key consideration is whether a degree in the field or a focus in the specialization held by a faculty member appropriately matches the courses the faculty member would teach in accordance with the conventions of the academic field.

   1. Undergraduate Courses Enrolling Only Baccalaureate Students

      Faculty teaching undergraduate courses enrolling only baccalaureate students may be deemed qualified if they have earned a:

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- Master's degree or higher in the teaching discipline or subfield; or
- Master's degree or higher in any discipline with at least 18 graduate semester credit hours in the discipline in which they are teaching.

Teaching assistants who teach undergraduate courses are excluded from this requirement only if they are enrolled in a graduate program, are provided in-service training, are supervised by a faculty member with expertise in the discipline, and have planned and periodic evaluations.

2. Master's-level Graduate Courses and Mixed Undergraduate/Graduate Courses

Faculty teaching master's-level graduate courses or mixed undergraduate/graduate courses may be deemed qualified if they possess a:
- Record of research, scholarship, or achievement appropriate for the graduate program; and
- Terminal degree (e.g. Ph.D., Ed.D., J.D., MFA, etc. as determined by academic department) in the teaching discipline or subfield; or
- Terminal degree in any discipline with at least 18 completed graduate semester credit hours in the teaching discipline or subfield.

3. Doctoral-level Courses

Faculty teaching doctoral courses may be deemed qualified if they possess a:
- Terminal degree in the teaching discipline or subfield; and
- Demonstrated record of research and scholarship appropriate to the program and degree offered.

4. Undergraduate Medical Education or Graduate Medical Education Courses within the Central Michigan University College of Medicine

Medical faculty teaching undergraduate or graduate medical education courses within the Central Michigan University College of Medicine may be deemed qualified if they possess a:
- Terminal degree in the teaching discipline or subfield as defined by the College of Medicine;
- Demonstrated record of research and scholarship appropriate to the program and degree offered; and
- History of pertinent professional experience appropriate to the teaching discipline or subfield deemed sufficient by the College of Medicine, e.g. clinical experiences, business degrees, etc.

B. **Experience-based Qualifications**

In the absence of the academic qualifications articulated above (Section II.A), qualification to teach in a particular discipline may be based on other credentials, except for those teaching in the University Program and teaching undergraduate or graduate medical education courses within the Central Michigan University College of Medicine.

A department may justify a faculty member's assignment to teach a given course based on a combination of academic, experiential, and other credentials including, as appropriate, undergraduate or graduate degrees, related work experiences, professional licenses and certifications, or other demonstrated competencies and achievements that contribute to effective teaching. These experiences should be equivalent to the degree that would otherwise be required for the faculty teaching position. This experience should be tested experience in

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that it includes a breadth and depth of experience outside of the classroom in real-world situations relevant to and current in the discipline in which the faculty member would be teaching.

Although appropriate experiences will vary from discipline to discipline, departments relying on experienced-based qualifications should (1) consider experiences and engagement activities that qualify faculty to teach pursuant to a system of evaluation established by the agency accrediting the discipline or (2) develop faculty hiring qualifications that outline a minimum threshold of experience of 10 years and a system of evaluation. Tested experience qualifications should be:

- Established for specific disciplines and programs;
- Consistent across all hires in that area; and
- Expressed clearly in the position description at the time of hiring.

C. Approval of Exceptions

Departments may request permission from their dean to allow a faculty member who does not meet the above academic or experienced-based qualifications to teach on a course-by-course basis. The department chair or chair of the interdisciplinary council must provide the dean with an explanation of the person's qualifications in the area of instruction and evidence of those qualifications, such as academic degrees in related areas, scholarly accomplishments, outreach, professional experience or credentials, or appropriate coursework as documented on an official academic transcript.

D. Documentation of Qualifications

It is the responsibility of the instructional unit offering the courses, which the faculty member will teach to verify their teaching qualifications as noted in this document. The responsibility for ensuring appropriate credentials for all teaching faculty teaching lies with the applicable dean. Copies of all credentials and original transcripts shall be maintained within the faculty member's personnel file held by Faculty Personnel Services.

Central Michigan University reserves the right to make exceptions to, modify or eliminate this policy and/or its content. This document supersedes all previous university-wide policies, procedures or guidelines relative to this subject.