

**SOUTHERN WEST VIRGINIA COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGE  
BOARD OF GOVERNORS  
SCP-2171**

- SUBJECT:** Establishing Minimum Standards and Qualifications for Faculty and Instructional Specialists
- REFERENCE:** The Higher Learning Commission (HLC) publication “*Institutional Policies and Procedures for Determining Faculty Qualifications: HLC’s Criteria for Accreditation and Assumed Practices*,” November 2023; The Higher Learning Commission Guidelines, “*Dual Credit*,” November 2023; The Higher Learning Commission Policy, “*Faculty Qualifications Adopted on Second Reading*,” November 2023; SCP-2250, *Hiring Adjunct Faculty*; 135 C.S.R. 45, *Community and Technical College Faculty Instructional Load*; SIP-2171, *Professional and Education Requirements for Faculty*; SCP-2171.A, *Faculty Credentials Certification Form*.
- ORIGINATION:** September 1, 2000
- EFFECTIVE:** January 17, 2020
- REVIEWED:** January 8, 2024

**SECTION 1. PURPOSE**

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy is to establish minimum standards and qualifications for instructional faculty and staff. Southern West Virginia Community and Technical College is committed to the highest standards of instructional delivery and committed to ensuring that faculty meet minimum qualifications in each discipline. To ensure student success, the College is committed to ensuring that every student will have faculty members who have the academic preparation and experience to be effective in each course they teach. Extensive efforts will be made to hire fully qualified candidates meeting the minimum education standards and experience required of each position, which this policy establishes as the mandatory minimum standards and qualifications needed for faculty members.
- 1.2 The purpose of this policy is also to establish a system for documenting the minimum professional and educational requirements for faculty members of Southern West Virginia Community and Technical College and a system for documenting faculty and instructional staff credentials.

**SECTION 2. SCOPE AND APPLICABILITY**

- 2.1 This policy applies to all full and part-time faculty, instructional staff, and dual-credit instructors teaching courses for Southern West Virginia Community and Technical College.

**SECTION 3. DEFINITIONS**

- 3.1 Faculty – For the purpose of this policy, faculty are those individuals employed with faculty rank whose major responsibility is the delivery of courses of instruction, including full-time, adjunct, dual credit, and instructional specialists.
- 3.2 Full-time Faculty – An individual employed on a full-time year to year basis designated as faculty who holds rank and is assigned a full-time workload per institutional guidelines.

- 3.3 Adjunct Faculty – Those individuals employed by the College on a part-time basis for the delivery of courses of instruction. An adjunct faculty teaching load will be limited to nine credit hours per semester.
- 3.4 Dual-Credit Instructors – Those individuals who teach courses in which the students receive both high school credit and college credit for the same course.
- 3.5 Instructional Specialist – A type of term appointment defined as those faculty members who have been appointed minimally on a nine-month basis and an hourly workload. The appointment is for a specified term not to exceed three years. The instructional specialist is eligible to receive reappointment to additional terms. No number of term appointments shall create any presumption of a right to reappointment or to appointment as a tenure-track (probationary) or a tenured faculty. In addition to teaching, instructional specialists will have responsibilities for various academic support activities.

#### **SECTION 4. POLICY**

- 4.1 All full-time and part-time teaching faculty, instructional specialists, and dual-credit instructors of Southern West Virginia Community and Technical College shall meet the professional and educational requirements of the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) as outlined in this policy and shall provide the College with all required employment and educational/professional credentials to verify and document their qualifications and experience.

#### **SECTION 5. BACKGROUND OR EXCLUSIONS**

- 5.1 None.

#### **SECTION 6. GENERAL PROVISIONS**

- 6.1 Professional and Educational Qualifications
  - 6.1.1 Minimum Qualifications: The following Southern West Virginia Community and Technical College professional and educational minimum qualifications for full and part-time teaching faculty are consistent with the guidance of the Higher Learning Commission (HLC).
    - 6.1.1.1 Faculty who teach courses at the associate degree level in the general education transfer area shall have a minimum of a master's degree in the discipline or sub-field of study in which they teach or a master's degree in a cognate field with a minimum of 12 graduate level hours in a discipline consistent with the teaching assignment or a Master of Education degree with a specific focus of coursework related to the discipline and a specified number of graduate units in the specific discipline. Faculty with a minimum of 12 graduate-level hours in a discipline consistent with the teaching assignment shall be on a Professional Progression Plan. The issuance of an honorary degree is not equivalent to an earned academic degree, but the justification for issuance may be considered as part of a portfolio based on the applicant's contributions to industry, society, or the discipline under section 6.2 below.
    - 6.1.1.2 Faculty who teach courses in the career/technical associate degree and certificate program areas shall have a minimum of a bachelor's degree in the field and a combination of education, training, and tested experience that documents technical competence in the field and/or program area in which they teach.

6.1.1.3 Academic Lab Managers who provide instructional support for programs/courses shall have a bachelor's degree or higher in a laboratory-related discipline, have an equivalent combination of education and experience/training, or hold the appropriate credentials and experience as determined by the program's national accrediting agency.

6.1.1.4 Faculty who teach courses as part of an academic program that maintains national accreditation or state licensure shall have the minimum credentials required by the accrediting/licensing body.

## 6.2 Exceptions to Minimum Requirements

6.2.1 Equivalent experience shall be based on qualifications of such depth and breadth that it provides an equivalent to the academic degree or graduate coursework required for the position. The use of equivalent experience may not be based on teaching experience in the discipline but rather focused on the faculty member's current academic achievement as it relates to the specific discipline and course content and documentation of a level of experience, skill sets, research, professional development, recognized achievement, previous work experience in the field, state/national speaking engagements, data showing student success, certifications, and other credentials or qualifications that would meet or exceed the education requirement.

6.2.2 Sources of experience shall focus on the necessary content knowledge required in the discipline. These sources may include specialized professional development courses, employment-related training, or employment-related experience. Another source is a documented history of activity in academic societies, professional organizations, or research roles related to the discipline with demonstrated activity through peer-reviewed, consistent publications and presentations on matters of discipline content. This source of experience is most generally applicable to career-technical type courses or situations where a terminal degree does not fully align with the research or experiential history of a faculty member.

6.2.3 In addition to the experience listed above, dual-credit instructors may present evidence of student achievement on college-level examinations that demonstrate successful teaching and learning on a college level. The faculty member may submit documentation demonstrating successful completion of advanced placement tests for the majority of students in a course over a three-year period for consideration for a portion of the equivalent experience portfolio.

6.2.4 In cases where a faculty member's experience does not match specific courses in a discipline's coursework, the College will allow an instructor to teach only those courses as deemed qualified pursuant to Section 6.1.1 above, and the Faculty Credentials Certification Form (SCP-2171.A) will be noted accordingly.

6.2.5 In certain exceptional cases, and after exhausting other avenues to obtain a credentialed candidate meeting the specific requirements of 6.1.1 and the position being advertised for a minimum of two advertisements unsuccessfully, unique experience and demonstrated competency may be substituted for academic preparation. The faculty member shall submit a portfolio demonstrating the depth and breadth of the experience, and an exception must be justified on an individual basis. An assessment of the portfolio must be approved by a committee of the deans and the Chief Academic Officer or President. The College shall maintain in the faculty member's transcript file the portfolio of detailed documentation of work experience, certifications, and other qualifications used as a substitute or supplement to formal academic preparation or required degrees.

- 6.2.6 If required, the faculty granted an exception must immediately begin taking the necessary courses to meet the educational or certification requirement and must complete the requirement of the Professional Progression Plan within the specified timeframe to remain eligible for employment.

### 6.3 Documenting Faculty Credentials Certification

- 6.3.1 Each applicant shall furnish the application with resume/vita and unofficial transcripts at the time of application. Prior to receiving an offer of employment, the applicant must provide official transcripts by the first day of employment, which Human Resources shall keep in the faculty member's transcript file.
- 6.3.2 The Faculty Credentials Certification Form (SCP-2171.A) has been designed to ensure all required credentials are part of an employee's official transcript file. The appropriate dean shall provide a list of all courses the employee is qualified to teach and the degrees, special certifications, and/or experiences that meet HLC credentialing requirements for teaching the listed courses. The dean shall furnish the completed form with all documentation to the Human Resources Office for the employee's official transcript file.
- 6.3.3 The faculty member is responsible for notifying the dean and Human Resources when there is a change to the faculty member's credentials and shall provide updated copies of official transcripts to Human Resources at that time. If necessary, the dean shall review the Faculty Credentials Certification Form (SCP- 2171.A) and update it every semester and when changes are required due to changes in accreditation requirements or State or federal law.

## SECTION 7. RESPONSIBILITIES

- 7.1 Full-time and part-time faculty members, instructional specialists, and dual-credit instructors shall:
  - 7.1.1 Furnish all employment and teaching credentials for their official transcript file;
  - 7.1.2 Make continuous progress in their professional growth; and
  - 7.1.3 If, by approved exception, minimum educational requirements are not met, they must enroll immediately in a program designed to achieve the required degree or educational levels and consistently continue the program to completion to maintain employment eligibility.
- 7.2 The appropriate dean shall:
  - 7.2.1 Complete and sign a Faculty Credentials Certification Form (SCP-2171.A) for each faculty member within their school and/or program area and send the Faculty Credentials Certification Form (SCP-2171.A) to Human Resources to include in the personnel/transcript files;
  - 7.2.2 If the faculty member earns additional credentials, complete an updated Faculty Credentials Certification Form (SCP-2171.A) and send it to the Human Resources Office;
  - 7.2.3 Ensure educational and professional background of all faculty members in their department, division, and/or program area meet the standards established by HLC and this institution. Full-time faculty employed prior to the effective date of this policy and not meeting the minimum educational requirements as stated will be provided institutional assistance through professional development funds and/or tuition waivers to meet minimum requirements within a reasonable period of time;
  - 7.2.4 Develop, in consultation with the affected faculty member, a Professional Development Plan designed to achieve the required degree or educational levels for teaching in discipline; and

7.2.5 Review annually, as part of the performance evaluation, progress made by each faculty member on their professional development plan, particularly those teaching under an approved exception.

7.3 Chief Human Resources Officer shall:

7.3.1 Add faculty credentials to the Faculty Credentialing Database once the Faculty Credentials Certification Form (SCP-2171.A) is shared with the Office of Human Resources; and

7.3.2 File the official transcripts and Faculty Credentials Certification Form (SCP-2171.A) in the faculty member's transcript file.

## **SECTION 8. CANCELLATION**

8.1 None.

## **SECTION 9. REVIEW STATEMENT**

9.1 This policy shall be reviewed on a regular basis with a time frame for review to be determined by the President or the President's designee. Upon such review, the President or President's designee may recommend to the Board that the policy be amended or repealed.

## **SECTION 10. SIGNATURES**

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**President**

**Date**

**Attachments:** SCP-2171.A, Faculty Credentials Certification Form

**Distribution:** Board of Governors (12 members)  
www.southernwv.edu

**Revision Notes:** September 29, 2007 – Revised to exclude references to instructional staff, to update titles, and to add references.

December 11, 2012 – Revisions reflect a reduction in the minimum requirement for faculty teaching transitional studies courses. Definition of a full-time faculty modified to match that found in other institutional policies. Expanded requirements for vocational/occupational program faculty to include equivalent credentials, such as licenses and certifications. Included the requirement to review Faculty Credentials Certification Form annually with faculty evaluation.

March 2, 2016 – Revised to reflect changes in guidelines in determining qualified faculty through the HLC's criteria for accreditation and to reflect any title and name changes for the College and the HLC.

August 29, 2019 – Revisions include added references: inserted the definition for an instructional specialist to match that found in other institutional policies; clarification of the minimum number of advertisements required in 6.2.1; included process for updating the Faculty Credentials Certification Form (SCP-2171.A); included responsibilities for the Human Resource Director; and title changes.

November 30, 2021 – Revised policy to match HLC approved guidelines from other similar institutions. Clarified applicant, faculty, and administration roles and responsibilities for applying, hiring, and reporting of qualifications. Revised and limited use of tested exceptions, strengthened required minimum qualifications for all teaching faculty, and limited the use of experience rather than academic credentials as the primary source of qualification.

January 8, 2024 – Revised policy to match HLC’s approved policy and to match SIP-2171 on faculty credentialing.