

**SOUTHERN WEST VIRGINIA COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGE
ACADEMIC AFFAIRS
PROCEDURE
SIP-2171**

- SUBJECT:** Faculty Credentialing
- REFERENCE:** SCP-2171, *Professional and Educational Requirements for Faculty*; SCP-2171.A, *Faculty Credentials Certification Form*; The Higher Learning Commission (HLC) publication *“Instructional 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.
- ORIGINATION:** August 6, 2018
- EFFECTIVE:** September 10, 2019
- REVIEWED:** December 4, 2023

SECTION 1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 This guidance sets forth the procedure used by the Chief Academic Officer to ensure that each faculty member employed with Southern West Virginia Community and Technical College possesses the academic preparation, training, and equivalent experience or has a Professional Progression Plan to meet the minimum requirements of accrediting bodies and the Council for Community and Technical College Education.

SECTION 2. SCOPE AND APPLICABILITY

- 2.1 This procedure applies to all faculty at Southern West Virginia Community and Technical College and to other individuals assigned to perform faculty work. Faculty who teach courses shall have appropriate discipline-specific credentials, equivalent experience, or progression to qualify as experts in course subjects. Faculty will communicate knowledge and skills in those subjects to their students in a manner that will promote student success. Each faculty member shall provide appropriate documentation such as vitae, official degree transcripts, certifications, professional licenses, and professional development certificates to document their qualifications as content experts in all course sections taught.

SECTION 3. DEFINITIONS

- 3.1 Equivalent experience – Equivalent experience includes a breadth and depth of experience outside the classroom in real-world situations relevant to the discipline and course content the faculty member is teaching. This can include research, professional development, recognized achievement, previous work experience in the field, state/national speaking engagements, and data showing student success. Previous years of classroom instruction do not alone constitute equivalent experience.
- 3.2 Credentials – An earned academic degree, certifications, and professional licenses that establish the faculty member’s credibility as a content expert. Achievement of academic credentials means that the faculty possesses an academic degree relevant to what they are teaching and at least one level above the level at which they teach.

- 3.2.1 Faculty teaching in general education courses and other non-occupational courses shall hold a master's degree or higher. If the faculty holds a degree in a discipline or subfield other than the one they are teaching, the individual should hold a minimum of 12 graduate credit hours toward that discipline or subfield. The faculty shall reach 18 hours of graduate credit prior to the first promotion-in-rank.
- 3.2.2 Faculty teaching in technical college-level certificate and degree programs shall hold a bachelor's degree in the field or a combination of education, training, and equivalent experience similar to a bachelor's degree. In these cases, appropriate qualifications such as professional certificates, licenses, and recognition will be identified as suitable.
- 3.2.3 Faculty teaching in disciplines that require licensures and/or certifications are responsible for providing documentation of the licensures and/or certifications to Human Resources immediately upon receipt or renewal.
- 3.3 Progress toward academic credentials – Demonstrable, current, and consistent progress toward the academic credentials deemed relevant by Southern for the faculty to be qualified. If the faculty is qualified on this basis the faculty shall have a maximum of four years to move from progression to fully credentialed.
- 3.4 Other Entities – Entities other than Southern West Virginia Community and Technical College to which the College assigns the responsibility of instruction. This could include, for example, contractual partners, dual enrollment partners, institutional subsidiaries, and other related entities.
- 3.5 Professional Progression Plan – A plan developed by the Program Directors, Deans, Human Resources, and faculty members working collaboratively that documents how the faculty member will become fully credentialed based on academic credentialing or equivalent experience.

SECTION 4. PROCEDURE

- 4.1 The Academic Dean may submit guidelines for determining faculty qualifications, including equivalent experience, as deemed appropriate. If the faculty is not fully credentialed based solely on academic credentialing, then the Dean and Human Resources will initiate a Professional Progression Plan collaboratively with the faculty.

SECTION 5. BACKGROUND OR EXCLUSIONS

- 5.1 The Higher Learning Commission requires institutions to justify and document the qualifications of faculty as part of its accreditation process. When the College utilizes equivalent experience as a basis for hiring faculty, it will review the resume and curriculum vitae, transcripts, work history, professional development, licenses, certifications, and speaking engagements. When the faculty member is credentialed with a Professional Progression Plan, the faculty member will be informed that they will be qualified for four years only and must finish the plan by that time. If the faculty member does not complete the plan within the allotted time frame, he or she may be terminated.

SECTION 6. GENERAL PROVISIONS

- 6.1 The general information related to the faculty credentialing procedure for implementation will include equivalent experience with the possibility of a Professional Progression Plan for faculty qualifications.

SECTION 7. RESPONSIBILITIES

- 7.1 Academic Deans – The Academic Dean reviews the proposed faculty’s credentials and equivalent experience. Any suggested Professional Progression Plan is then forwarded to Human Resources for approval. The Academic Dean is responsible for ensuring these guidelines are reviewed annually.
- 7.2 Human Resources Department – The Human Resources department will maintain an electronic database of faculty credentials that contains the same information as in the Faculty Credentials folders. The Human Resources department will use this database to provide accurate, timely information to various accrediting agencies, federal/state agencies, and College departments. Human Resources is responsible for ensuring these guidelines are followed and reviewed.

SECTION 8. CANCELLATION

- 8.1 None

SECTION 9. REVIEW STATEMENT

- 9.1 This procedure 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 Cabinet-level Administrator may recommend to the President’s Cabinet that the procedure be amended or repealed.

SECTION 10. SIGNATURES

President Date

Cabinet-level Administrator Date

Attachments: None.

Distribution: All Southern Employees
Intranet

Revision Notes: Originated August 6, 2018

December 4, 2023 – Updated to reflect new terminology and guidelines from the Higher Learning Commission (HLC), effective November 2023.