



Campus Administrative Policy

Policy Title: Evaluating Qualifications of Instructional Faculty

Policy Number: 1026 Functional Area: Academic & Faculty Affairs

Effective: December 1, 2024

Approved by: Roderick Nairn
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University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus
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Applies to: CU Anschutz
CU Denver

A. INTRODUCTION

This policy (i) creates a campus-wide standard and sets common expectations for the appointment of all instructional faculty hired at the University of Colorado Denver and the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus and (ii) also meets the accreditation standards adopted by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) in November 2023. This policy applies to all academic schools and colleges and should be read in conjunction with the policies cross-listed, below. Instructional faculty is defined as any instructor who is a course Instructor of Record (APS 1025).

B. POLICY STATEMENT

Each school/college is required to establish its own policies governing the appointment, review, and reappointment of instructional faculty. School/college policies must contain a comprehensive set of procedures that conform to the general principles set forth herein and must appear in a document that is readily available (in print and on the web) to all faculty members of the school or college.

C. UNIVERSITY REQUIREMENTS

This section delineates what must appear in each school/college’s procedures concerning the employment of instructional faculty:

- Initial Appointment (including dossier, curriculum vitae, resume, etc., required, titles, qualifications needed (see D, below) for each rank, workload and compensation, length of appointment and other processes for appointment approval).

- Reappointment and Performance Review (including annual performance reviews, promotion, reappointment and/or annual review criteria and process or procedures) consistent with existing University guidelines.

D. HLC QUALIFICATIONS AND SCHOOL/COLLEGE POLICIES ON INSTRUCTIONAL FACULTY

In addition to any Regental or University limits on rank and/or titles, schools and colleges are required to include in their procedures, a process for determining appropriate faculty qualification by (1) credential and qualification and (2) equivalent experience as described in the new accreditation standards adopted by the HLC in November 2023.

i. Faculty Qualification by Academic Credentials

The default standard for all instructors is a terminal degree, or a degree at least one level higher than the degree for which a course being taught can be counted. Examples of the latter include a master’s degree to teach a course that counts toward a bachelor’s degree, or a doctoral degree to teach a course that counts toward a master’s degree. Exceptions include cases where the norm in the discipline (e.g., J.D. holders teaching Ph.D. students in law-related fields or M.F.A. degree holders teaching Ph.D. students in the arts) or the accreditation standards of the profession otherwise allow for.

Faculty recommended for instructional faculty positions (contractual/ranked and affiliate) must possess, at minimum:

- *Doctoral Program Faculty:* Instructional faculty in doctoral programs must possess an earned doctoral degree and a record of scholarship appropriate to the discipline.
- *Masters Program Faculty:* Instructional faculty in masters programs, should hold the terminal degree determined by the discipline and have a record of research, scholarship or achievement appropriate for the graduate program.
- *Undergraduate Program Faculty:* Instructional faculty in undergraduate programs, should possess the terminal degree. At a minimum, undergraduate instructional faculty must possess a master’s degree in the discipline OR at least 18 graduate credit hours in the discipline.

ii. Faculty Qualification by Equivalent Experience

The value of using equivalent experience to determine minimal faculty qualifications depends upon the relevance of the individual faculty member’s experience both to the degree level and to the specific content of the courses the faculty member is teaching. Schools and colleges that use equivalent experience as a basis for hiring faculty must have well-defined policies, procedures and documentation that demonstrate when such experience is sufficient to determine that the faculty member has the expertise necessary to teach students in that discipline. In their policies on equivalent experience as a basis for hiring faculty members, schools and colleges should develop faculty hiring qualifications that outline a

minimum threshold of experience and a system of evaluation. Equivalent experience qualifications should be established for specific disciplines and programs and could include skill sets, types of certifications or additional credentials, and experiences. Documented qualifications would ensure consistency and transparency in hiring and human resources policies. The faculty hiring qualifications related to equivalent experience should be reviewed and approved through the school or college's faculty governance process—a step that should be highlighted for peer review teams, as appropriate.

Equivalent experience is defined as experience the academic unit determines is equivalent to the degree it would otherwise require for a faculty position. Such experience must include a breadth and depth of experience outside the classroom in applied settings relevant to the discipline being taught. Provided that the faculty candidate holds at least a baccalaureate degree, the following guidelines may, at the discretion of the academic dean or designee, be used in determining faculty qualification via “equivalent experience”:

- *By professional accomplishment* – A faculty member who may not have the relevant degree at the university prescribed level, but provides evidence of exemplary work and accomplishment as a practitioner.
- *By 3rd party credential* – A faculty member who may not have the relevant degree at the university prescribed level but has earned a high-level industry certification as the result of rigorous training combined with at least 5 years of experience working in that field.
- *By artistic achievement* – A faculty member teaching creative writing, animation, painting, or music may not have a relevant degree at the University prescribed level, but may have expertise, ability and/or talent validated through publications or through wide critical and public acclaim.
- *By language proficiency* – A faculty member teaching foreign language courses may not have a relevant degree at the university prescribed level but may have expertise, ability and/or talent validated through a nationally recognized rating of proficiency in foreign language.

In cases of faculty qualification via equivalent experience by virtue of any of the categories listed above, the academic dean or designee will review the documentation and may approve such exceptions in writing.

Notes

1. History:

- September 21, 2018: Adopted/Approved by both Chancellors
- 2015: (New Policy) This policy was created: (i) to respond to the HLC accreditation standards adopted by the HLC in June 2015.
- 2024: This policy was amended in response to HLC policy changes adopted November 2023.

2. Cross References/Appendix:

- *Regent Law and Policy.*
 - [Article 5: Faculty](#)

- *Administrative Policy Statements.*
 - [APS 1006: Differentiated Annual Workloads for Faculty](#)
 - [APS 1025: Uniform Grading Policy](#)

- *Campus Administrative Policy.*
 - 4012: Employment Checks
 - 1019: Instructional, Research, and Clinical Faculty Appointments
 - 1012: Differentiated Annual Workloads – CU Denver
 - 1005: Faculty Compensation – CU Anschutz
 - 1006: Faculty Compensation – CU Denver
 - 1008: Faculty Transfers between Departments, Schools and Colleges, of the University of Colorado Denver|Anschutz Medical Campus
 - 1002: Hiring Process for Full-Time Faculty
 - 1027D: Multi-Year Contracts for Instructional, Research, and Clinical Faculty with Teaching Responsibilities or Librarian Appointments – CU Denver
 - 1027A: Multi-Year Contracts for Instructional, Research, and Clinical Faculty – CU Anschutz
 - 1028: Non-Tenure Track Faculty Performance Reviews

3. Responsible Office(s):

- Office of the Provost