Minimum Qualifications for Instructors

No: S-77

Authority: ____________________________ Date: _________________

Initiator: Provost

Responsible Party: Provost

I. Purpose
The purpose of this policy is to articulate a university-wide standard for instructor qualifications at UWM. This policy is developed to meet accreditation standards of the Higher Learning Commission on minimum qualifications for instructors and in support of UWM’s commitment to provide students with the best possible learning experience. As an institution accredited by the Higher Learning Commission, UWM has the obligation to demonstrate that all instructors are appropriately qualified to teach the courses that are assigned to them.

II. Policy
a. Applicability: This policy applies to all instructors (including those with appointments as faculty or instructional academic staff) who teach courses for which students will earn UWM credit. This policy does not apply to graduate teaching assistants who work under the direct supervision of a faculty member or an instructional academic staff member.

b. Qualification by Credentials: The primary method of determining the qualifications of an instructor will be based on their academic credentials including earned degree in the field or subject area relevant to the course taught. The degree must be from an institution accredited by a regional accrediting body recognized by the US Department of Education and/or a professional accrediting organization, or the equivalent quality of university or college in countries outside the United States.

i. Instructors teaching in graduate programs should hold the terminal degree determined by the discipline and have a record of research, scholarship or achievement appropriate to the program and degree offered.

ii. Instructors teaching in undergraduate programs must have master’s degree or higher in the discipline or program area in which they teach or develop courses.

c. Alternative Qualification: If an instructor does not meet the credentials requirement, the applicable department (or equivalent) and school/college have the option to appoint him/her to teach the course based on tested experience. Departments, or equivalents, in consultation with the relevant school/college, must have written guidelines on the minimum threshold of experience and have
processes for reviewing and documenting the alternative qualifications of such instructors. In developing the guidelines, departments, or equivalents, may consider the following factors:

i. Substantial (greater than 18 semester credits or the approximate equivalent thereto) graduate-level academic coursework in the discipline or program area,

ii. Practical experience in a relevant field (e.g., arts, business, legal, or public service sector),

iii. Relevant clinical experience,

iv. Demonstrated competence or fluency in a language other than English and demonstrated ability to teach that language, and

v. Related research experience in industry or government agencies

d. Documentation Requirement: Documentation of department, or equivalent, guidelines and processes should be on file with the relevant Dean or Director’s office. Upon request from an external reviewer, the department, or equivalent, must produce documentation of individual instructor’s credentials and/or tested experience, and the rationale for the decision to assign specific courses to the instructor.

III. Procedures

a. Each department, or equivalent, should document the verification of instructor qualifications using the attached form or an equivalent document.

b. The minimum qualifications statements in faculty and instructional academic staff vacancy postings should have language consistent with this policy.

c. The hiring unit should ensure that the instructor qualifications are verified before assigning courses to the instructor.

IV. Forms

See attached Instructor Qualification Verification Form
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

Instructor Qualifications Verification Form

As an institution accredited by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC), UWM adheres to the HLC standards on roles and qualifications of instructors. UWM Policy S-77 sets forth the campus policy and process for demonstrating that instructors (faculty and instructional academic staff) are appropriately qualified to teach courses for which students earn UWM credit. Departments, or equivalents, and schools/colleges at UWM can use this form or an equivalent one to document the evaluation process used to verify the qualifications of instructors. This form must be used for all instructors except teaching assistants who are directly supervised by a qualified faculty or instructional academic staff. If the graduate assistant is the instructor of record for a course, this form must be completed in such cases.

A. Instructor Information:
   Name: ___________________________ School/College: ___________________________
   Department: ___________________________
   Discipline/Curricular Area of Instruction: ___________________________

B. Appointment Status:
   □ Faculty Title: ___________________________
   □ Academic Staff Title: ___________________________

C. Highest level of credential (Choose one. Attach relevant documents such as transcripts, CV, etc.):
   □ Doctoral/terminal degree in discipline/curricular area
   □ Master’s degree in discipline/curricular area
   □ Master’s degree in any area + 18 graduate credits or more in discipline/curricular area
   □ Other (Specify: ___________________________

D. Verification of qualification based on credential:
   Based on credentials, the instructor is qualified to teach at the following level(s) in the curricular area/discipline:
   □ Doctoral □ Masters □ Baccalaureate
   If the instructor is approved to teach only specific courses in the program based on credentials, please list the courses here.
   (Leave table empty if the instructor is qualified to teach all courses at the indicated level.):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course prefix and number</th>
<th>Course title</th>
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E. Alternative qualifications: (Choose all that apply. Attach relevant documents such as transcripts, CV, etc.)
   □ Baccalaureate degree + 18 graduate credits or more in discipline/program area
   □ Professional experience (Describe briefly below. Attach documents, if needed)
F. Verification of qualification based on Alternative Qualifications

Based on Alternative Qualifications, the instructor is qualified to teach at the following level(s) in the curricular area/discipline:

- [ ] Doctoral
- [ ] Masters
- [ ] Baccalaureate

If the instructor is approved to teach specific courses in the program based on Alternative Qualifications, please specify the courses here (Attach additional sheets, if needed):

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<th>Course prefix and number</th>
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G. Approvals

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Signature</th>
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<tr>
<td>Chair/Program Director:</td>
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<td>Dean or Associate Dean:</td>
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A copy of this form should be maintained in the Department/Dean’s office and should be produced along with supporting documents in the event of an audit or accreditation review.