

Title: Policy for the Verification of Faculty Credentials

Approved by: Faculty Senate

Date approved by Faculty Senate: January 30, 2018

Effective date: January 30, 2018

Responsible Official: Provost or the Provost's Designee

Responsible University Office: Office of the Provost

Revision History: N/A

Related legislation and University policies:

- (1) Higher Learning Commission Guidance: "Commission Guidance on Determining Qualified Faculty"
- (2) Any applicable guidance from school-level or program-level accrediting bodies

Review Period: 5 years

Date of Last Review: N/A

Relates to: Faculty (including instructors who are also graduate students and/or staff)

## Policy for the Verification of Faculty Credentials

### POLICY

It is the policy of Case Western Reserve University that instructors of record teaching at the graduate level shall have done one or more of the following:

- Earned a terminal degree in (or the highest degree appropriate to) the academic field related to the intended teaching assignment.
- Provided evidence of appropriate professional experience equivalent to such degree.
- Provided evidence of tested experience appropriate to the specific teaching assignment.

Furthermore, it is the policy of Case Western Reserve University that instructors of record teaching at the undergraduate level shall have done one or more of the following:

- Earned a minimum of a master's degree (or can demonstrate the equivalent level of training) in an academic field related to the intended teaching assignment.
- Earned a minimum of a master's degree (or can demonstrate the equivalent level of training) in an academic field outside of the intended teaching assignment and has completed at least 18 credit hours at the graduate level in the discipline of the intended teaching assignment.
- Provided evidence of appropriate professional experience equivalent to such degree.
- Provided documentation of tested experience appropriate to the specific teaching assignment.

Instructors of record are those assigned to be responsible for a course, including aspects such as its design, content, pedagogy, assignments, and assessments.

The dean (or dean's designee) of the relevant constituent faculty is responsible for certifying to the Office of the Provost that the credentials of all instructors of record meet the requirements stated above. If an individual's academic degree(s) do not satisfy the qualifications for the proposed teaching assignment, then the Verification of Credentials Form (sample attached) must be submitted to the Office of the Provost. All official transcripts are to be kept on file in the dean's office. Any exceptions to this policy must be approved by the Provost's Office on a case-by-case basis.

### ADDITIONAL SPECIFICATIONS

The verification of faculty credentials shall be performed at the time of the initial teaching appointment at CWRU. In the case of individuals who hold appointments as of the effective date of this policy, the verification of faculty credentials shall be performed when they are considered for teaching a course outside any department (or constituent faculty, in a school not organized into departments) in which they hold an appointment (primary, secondary, or joint) and outside of the field(s) in which their academic degree(s) were earned.

Individuals who meet at least one of the criteria in the policy statement, as certified by the school dean, will be deemed qualified to teach appropriate courses within any department (or constituent faculty, in a school not organized into departments) in which they hold an appointment (primary, secondary, or joint). Once an individual has been deemed qualified through this process, the dean of the school has the final authority to determine whether that individual continues to qualify for a specific teaching assignment.

For teaching assignments that include cross-listed courses, the instructor of record would need to be certified as qualified in only one of the departments associated with the course.

This policy applies to CWRU staff members who may serve as an instructor of record either on an overload assignment or as part of their staff appointment. In addition, this policy also applies to graduate students who may be appointed as instructors of record for a course, but it does not apply to graduate students serving as teaching assistants in a course.

All academic degrees earned in the U.S. shall have been awarded by regionally accredited institutions. For those individuals whose degrees are earned abroad, official transcripts (original paper copies or certified electronic copies) or documents that verify receipt of the degree must be submitted to and evaluated to verify the authenticity of the academic documents and demonstrate their comparability with U.S. credentials.

Guidance regarding the criteria described in the Policy statement above is contained in the Higher Learning Commission document "Commission Guidance on Determining Qualified Faculty" ([http://download.hlcommission.org/FacultyGuidelines\\_2016\\_OPB.pdf](http://download.hlcommission.org/FacultyGuidelines_2016_OPB.pdf)). If the guidelines of school-level or program-level accrediting bodies require higher standards on faculty qualifications than specified in this policy, the faculty qualifications guidelines of that specialized accrediting body take precedence.

#### EFFECTIVE DATE

The policy becomes effective January 30, 2018.

#### ACCOUNTABILITY

Candidates for teaching positions are responsible for assuring that the official transcripts (and/or verification of relevant degrees) are submitted to the chair or director of the academic home department upon request. Candidates are also responsible for providing evidence to the department chair or director of licensure or certification in disciplines where such credentials are required. This documentation must be provided before the appointment to teach at CWRU can be made. Falsification or misrepresentation of credentials will subject the appointee to discipline up to and including termination.

The department chair or program director is responsible for obtaining official transcripts, verifying completion of relevant degrees, documenting professional experience and/or additional licensure and certification, and for following up on any concerns before forwarding the verification documents to the dean. Chairs and directors shall verify all faculty credentials no later than the effective date of employment, and this verification process must be completed prior to the first day of class.

The provost or provost's designee is responsible for maintaining an electronic database of teaching credentials and auditing the records on an annual basis.

#### SOME EXAMPLES OF HOW A FACULTY MEMBER MIGHT BE QUALIFIED UNDER THIS POLICY

This policy is intended to afford the schools and the College some latitude with regard to the nature and quality of the credentials that can be used to justify the teaching appointment.

The following examples illustrate some possibilities:

- 1) A candidate for a teaching position has completed all of the coursework required for a PhD degree and is working on completing the PhD dissertation. It would be reasonable to argue that this person's transcript is evidence that she/he has academic credentials equivalent to a master's degree even though she/he may not have formally received the master's degree.
- 2) A candidate for a teaching position holds a PhD degree in one field (e.g., Classics) but is being considered for a teaching appointment in a closely aligned subject area (e.g., Latin or Greek). Similarly, a candidate with a PhD degree in Physics could be qualified to teach a course in Astronomy (and a candidate with a PhD in Astronomy could be qualified to teach in Physics). In both cases, it would be reasonable to argue that these individuals are academically qualified to teach a course in the related subject.
- 3) Suppose a candidate for a teaching position at CWRU had prior experience teaching in that subject area at a different institution. CWRU could consider that prior teaching assignment as "tested experience." This prior experience could have been either as an instructor of record at the prior institution, or under the guidance of one of the regular faculty members at that institution.
- 4) If the candidate had prior experience teaching in the subject at CWRU, either as instructor of record or under the guidance of one of our regular faculty members, that prior teaching could be considered tested experience.
- 5) If the candidate has published research in the field of the teaching assignment, that body of work could also be considered tested experience.
- 6) Experiences outside of an academic setting could also qualify someone for a teaching position. The HLC guidelines indicate that a "breadth and depth of experience outside of the classroom in real-world situations relevant to the discipline in which the faculty member would be teaching" could qualify the candidate for the teaching appointment.

## Verification of Credentials Form

This form (Part A or B) with the relevant attachments is to be submitted by the College/School to the Office of the Provost prior to the start of the semester of the teaching assignment

Candidate

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

- New Hire  
 Re-Hire  
 Teaching outside area of appointment  
 CWRU ID: \_\_\_\_\_

Semester/Year: \_\_\_\_\_

**Part A:** Undergraduate Teaching – The individual is being hired to teach undergraduate courses only and does not have a doctor’s or master’s degree in the discipline. The request to hire is based on the following:

- The person holds at least a master’s degree with a concentration (minimum of 18 graduate semester hours) in a relevant discipline. Provide the transcript and document the 18 hours of relevant coursework.

Course Prefix and Number	Course Title	Number of Semester Hours	Institution

- The person has specific and current exceptional expertise that qualifies him/her to teach the courses to be assigned and an exception to the credentialing guidelines is requested. This is based on the following analysis of course content to be taught. Specific current documentation for each qualification listed (e.g., certifications, licenses, professional training documentation, job descriptions, letters, awards documentation, copies of work products, etc.) is attached.

Course	Course Content	Qualifications	Number of Supporting Documents Attached

**Part B:** Graduate Teaching – The individual is being hired to teach graduate courses as part of the teaching assignment and does not have a terminal degree in the discipline. The request to hire this person based on the following:

- The person holds at least a terminal degree with a concentration (minimum of 18 graduate semester hours) in a relevant discipline. Provide the transcript and document the 18 hours of relevant coursework.

Course Prefix and Number	Course Title	Number of Semester Hours	Institution

- The person has specific and current exceptional expertise that qualifies him/her to teach the courses to be assigned. The request for an exception to the credentialing guidelines is based on the following analysis of the course content to be taught. Current documentation for each qualification listed (e.g., certifications, licenses, professional training documentation, job descriptions, letters, awards documentation, copies of work products, etc.) is attached.

Course	Course Content	Qualifications	Number of Supporting Documents Attached

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Approval Signatures**

**Department Chair (if applicable)**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**College/School Dean (required)**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Provost Office**

Approve       Disapprove

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date