

Tenure-Stream and LEO Qualifications Policy University of Michigan-Dearborn

Background

The purpose of this policy is to establish minimum standards of academic qualifications for tenure-stream and LEO faculty on the University of Michigan-Dearborn campus. These standards conform to the assumed practices for teaching and learning set by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC).

HLC's rationale for stipulating a minimum set of requirements related to qualified faculty is to "ensure that students have access to faculty members who are experts in the subject matter they teach and who can communicate knowledge in that subject to their students." Moreover, HLC believes when "an institution indicates that a faculty member is qualified by means of an offer of employment, it is asserting its confidence in the faculty member's content expertise along with the ability of the faculty member to help position students for success not only in a particular class, but also in their academic program and their careers after they have completed their program." (Higher Learning Commission, "[Determining Qualified Faculty Through HLC's Criteria for Accreditation and Assumed Practices](#)," March 2016).

Scope of Policy

It is the policy of the UM-Dearborn that the following criteria and procedures applies to all tenure-stream and LEO faculty members whose primary responsibility is teaching at the undergraduate or graduate level, including any instructors teaching in dual credit programs.

- The primary method for determining the qualifications of faculty is by credentials, but other factors, including but not limited to equivalent experience, may be considered. As a result, all faculty¹ shall have an academic degree relevant to what they are teaching and at least one level above the level at which they teach, except in programs for terminal degrees.
- In terminal degree programs, faculty members shall have the same level of degree.
- Faculty teaching Dearborn Discovery Core (DDC) courses must hold a master's degree or higher in the DDC category² in which they are teaching.
- Instructors teaching in graduate programs should hold the terminal degree determined by the discipline faculty and have a record of research, scholarship or achievement appropriate for the graduate program.

¹ Excluding teaching assistants enrolled in a graduate program and supervised by faculty.

² Excluding Critical and Creative Thinking; Upper-Level Writing Intensive Course; and Intersections categories.

Exceptions

In circumstances where the above criteria are not met, faculty can be hired and/or retained if they meet the following standards for equivalent experience:

Undergraduate Instruction: For faculty who do not have an academic degree relevant to what they are teaching and at least one level above the level at which they teach, the following must be satisfied for an equivalent experience exception to be granted:

- A degree equivalent to the level the faculty member is teaching, plus 5 years of professional experience relevant to the content they are teaching, including tested / documented experience and advancement or recognition in the field. Evidence may include one or more of the following items but may not be limited to these items:
 - Documented activities such as research, publications, creative work or scholarly presentations
 - Documented experience, progression, recognition, and/or advancement in the field (e.g., public office or service, editorial boards or other professional work)
 - Additional education (certificates, credit-bearing coursework, professional or industry-recognized certifications or other honors)

The exception process to hire a faculty member under these criteria happens at the point of hire. The Provost's and Dean's authorization, as part of the regular recruitment process, will serve as the approval for the exception.

Graduate Instruction: For individuals requesting to teach at the graduate level, in instances where the criterion of appropriate terminal degree is not met, the following must be satisfied for an equivalent experience exception to be granted:

- Relevant experience of 7+ years, comprised of some combination of work experience and/or college-level teaching experience, with current experience being weighed more heavily than less recent experience. Evidence may include one or more of the following items but may not be limited to these items:
 - Documented activities such as research, publications, creative work or scholarly presentations
 - Documented experience, progression, recognition, and/or advancement in the field (e.g., public office or service, editorial boards or other professional work)
 - Additional education (certificates, credit-bearing coursework, professional or industry-recognized certifications or other honors)

The exception process to hire a faculty member under these criteria happens at the point of hire. The Provost's and Dean's authorization, as part of the regular recruitment process, will serve as the approval for the exception.

Dearborn Discovery Core: If a faculty member does not hold a master's degree or higher in the DDC category s/he is teaching that faculty member must have completed a minimum of 18 graduate credit hours in the category³ in which they teach.⁴

The exception process for DDC faculty members happens when a faculty member seeks to teach a DDC approved course. The Provost's and Dean's authorization will serve as the approval for the exception.

³ The following are the stipulated DDC categories: Written and Oral Communication, Quantitative Thinking and Problem Solving, Natural Sciences, Social and Behavioral Analysis, and Humanities and the Arts.

⁴ If the faculty member does not have a master's degree or higher than s/he can still satisfy the Undergraduate Instruction section above for equivalent experience. S/he would, however, still need to have at least 18 graduate credit hours in the DDC category for which s/he is teaching.