

## **AP 240a Hiring Qualified Faculty**

**Associated Board Policy:** 240

**Procedure Owner:** Vice President of Academic Affairs

**Related Procedures:** AP 240b Hiring Adjunct Faculty

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### **I. Procedure Scope and Purpose**

This procedure applies to the hiring of all faculty members at the institution. The College is committed to effective teaching and learning and will be able to demonstrate consistent evaluation procedures and careful consideration of qualifications for all instructional faculty. The Vice President of Academic Affairs has the final approval at all stages in the hiring process and will assign academic affairs personnel to facilitate the process. Finally, the ultimate hiring approval is completed by the President. Department chairs, associate vice presidents, or their designees, will be involved in the hiring process when appropriate in the following possible ways: identifying a need in their areas, reviewing applicant files, establishing and documenting qualifications, interviewing when needed, making recommendations for hire, mentoring of newly hired faculty, and delivering departmental orientation when appropriate.

The institution must have sufficient numbers and continuity of faculty members to carry out both the classroom and non-classroom roles of faculty including oversight of the curriculum, expectations for student performance, establishment of academic credentials for instructional staff, and involvement in the broad assessment of student learning. Every effort is made to hire gifted and qualified instructional faculty. Faculty must possess an academic degree relevant to what they are teaching and at least one level above the level they teach, except when equivalent experience is established.

Within a specific discipline or field of study, the faculty and staff needed for effective, high-quality programs and student services refers to a faculty member's ability to understand and convey the essentials of the discipline that a student should master at various course and programs levels. Qualified faculty should be able to engage professionally with colleagues in determining the specific, stated learning objectives for all graduates of a specific program as well as possess the full scope of knowledge, skills, and dispositions appropriate to the degree awarded. Faculty are expected to be actively involved with their personal professional development. In addition, qualified faculty should know the broad learning objectives of the institution for all of its students. The Higher Learning Commission expects that, through the higher education curricula that faculty develop, the exercise of intellectual inquiry and the acquisition, application, and integration of broad learning and skills are integral to its educational programs. Qualified faculty should also be aware of whether and how much students learn, since an institution should be able to demonstrate a commitment to educational achievement and improvement through ongoing assessment of student learning.

The purpose of this procedure is to ensure that qualified faculty are hired at the college.

## II. Definitions

*Determination by Credentials* – Faculty credentials generally refer to the degrees faculty have earned that provide a foundation for knowing what students should learn in a specific discipline or field. Over the years, some hallmarks and common expectations for faculty credentials have emerged within the higher education community, such as:

- A. Faculty teaching in higher education institutions should have completed a program of study in the discipline or subfield in which they will teach, and/or for which they will develop curricula, with coursework at least one level above that of the courses being taught or developed. Successful completion of a coherent degree better prepares a person than an unstructured collection of credit courses.
- B. Faculty teaching in undergraduate programs should hold a degree at least one level above that of the program in which they are teaching. Those teaching general education courses, or other courses that transfer, typically hold a master's degree or higher in the discipline or subfield. If a faculty member holds a master's degree or higher in a discipline or subfield other than that in which he or she is teaching, that faculty member should have completed a minimum of 18 graduate credit hours in the discipline or subfield in which they teach. This is the minimum threshold for educational credential requirements, and the minimum experience threshold is found on the evaluation process that follows within this document.
- C. Faculty teaching in career and technical education college-level certificate and occupational associate's degree programs should hold a bachelor's degree in the field and/or a combination of education, training and tested experience. (Note: See the Tested Experience section below.) Such qualifications are allowable even in instances where technical/occupational courses transfer.

*Determination by Factors Other Than Credentials* – Qualified faculty are identified primarily by credentials, but other factors may be considered in addition to the degrees earned. For example:

- A. Besides credentials, other attributes may be necessary to qualify someone to teach, such as the ability to design curricula, develop and implement effective pedagogy, and appreciate the breadth of knowledge in quality undergraduate education.
- B. Knowledge of a specific discipline as indicated by the credential is not all that is required since faculty carry other significant responsibilities such as conducting research, advising students, participating in co-curricular activities, and contributing to shared governance within college teams and committees.
- C. An earned degree does not necessarily attest to a faculty member's ongoing professional development in the field. Knowing what students should know is dependent upon the discovery of new knowledge and currency in the field.
- D. Because of changing academic, societal, and workforce needs, institutions are developing interdisciplinary and other non-traditional programs that require faculty to think beyond their own disciplines and traditional academic programs to determine what students should know and to design curricula accordingly.
- E. In some cases, such as in practice-oriented disciplines or programs, tested experience in the field may be needed as much as the formal educational preparation at the prescribed level in determining what students should know to practice.

*Faculty Employee Preparation* – In order that the College shall maintain a well-qualified staff in keeping with the institutional mission, the master’s degree shall be considered the preferred minimum educational requirement for teaching general education courses, and the bachelor’s degree shall be considered the preferred minimum educational requirement for teaching occupational courses. All vocational education personnel are expected to meet the certification requirements of the State of Kansas, and the College reserves the right to adopt specific requirements for each professional position. The President of the College shall have the authority to waive certain requirements to assure proper implementation or continuation of a program.

Those individuals who do not meet the preferred qualifications shall present a minimum of six credit hours per year toward the required degree. A plan for continued study must be developed in consultation with the Chief Academic Officer and approved by the President. Exceptions to these requirements shall be made only upon approval of the Chief Academic Officer and authorization by the President. Written request for an exception must be submitted to the Chief Academic Officer thirty (30) days in advance of re-employment.

*Higher Learning Commission (HLC)* – The higher education accrediting body in the United States. Cowley County Community College and Area Vocational-Technical School is fully accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges, one of the regional accrediting bodies for the Higher Learning Commission.

*Master Agreement* – The negotiated agreement between the College Board of Trustees and the Cowley Educational Association that describes faculty employment and expectations.

*Professional Development* – Professional development for all College faculty is essential for growth, practice change, discipline advances, pedagogy, and a host of other worthy reasons. Faculty are encouraged to complete continuing education via conferences, in-service training, journal review, research, and training sessions. In addition, professional development is offered via the online setting for all employees. It is recommended that faculty complete at least sixteen hours of professional development each year.

*Quality Assurance* – HLC expects that ‘Determination by Credentials’ will be the primary mechanism used by institutions to ascertain faculty qualifications. Determination of qualified faculty is completed at the time of hire and reviewed during the HLC comprehensive review (site visit).

*Tested Experience* – The value of using tested experience to determine faculty qualifications depends upon the relevance of the experience both to the degree level and to the specific content of the course(s) for which the faculty member is responsible. Tested experience implies that some objective measure ensures that the individual’s knowledge and expertise are sufficient for determining what students should learn and have learned. The following are, but not limited to, the following examples:

- A. A faculty member teaching undergraduate courses in human resources or business ethics may not have a relevant degree at the appropriate level but can provide evidence of effective work as a practicing labor relations attorney.
- B. A faculty member who teaches courses in a pre-associate technology program may not possess a graduate degree but might have the industry certification and years of experience working in that field.
- C. A faculty member teaching clinical courses may not have an advanced degree but, instead, may have documented recognition of excellence in teaching and discipline practice.

- D. A faculty member teaching creative writing, painting, or music may have had his or her expertise, ability, and talent validated through publications or through wide critical and public acclaim.
- E. A faculty member teaching conversational courses in Native American or foreign language may demonstrate his or her qualification through recognition of competence by tribal elders or through a nationally recognized rating of proficiency in foreign language.

### III. Procedure

- A. Before hiring, faculty credentials and other qualifying factors as defined above will be evaluated.
- B. The initial confidential evaluation will be completed by an Associate Vice President or Department Chair on the Hiring Qualified Faculty Documentation form and submitted to the Vice President of Academic Affairs.
- C. The Vice President of Academic Affairs will determine whether the candidate is hired based on these quality measures. If the candidate lacks the educational credentials, as per the Master Agreement, the faculty member may be employed and a Continued Faculty Education Plan form will be completed. It is expected that the faculty member will obtain the educational credential if employment is to be maintained.
- D. Educational credentials and years of related work experience are evaluated for determining placement on the salary schedule following these steps.
  - 1) Highest Degree Earned determines the Classification placement category (A – G)
  - 2) Years of related work experience are determined utilizing the following evaluation criteria:
    - a. 1 year for each full-time teaching position with an educational institution
    - b. .25 - .5 years for part – time teaching position (ie: adjunct, workforce trainer, etc.)
    - c. .5 - 1 for each year in other related career experience in education in non-teaching area (ie: academic/student support, advising, admissions, etc.)
    - d. .5 - 1 for each year for other career experience in related field
  - 3) Complete the *Documentation of Approved Experience and Education for Faculty Hiring* Form listing the credentials and experience in steps 1 and 2 to determine the combined education classification and years of experience to use for placement on the salary schedule
  - 4) Compare the classification determined to the existing salary schedule of current professional employees to identify similar placement. In no event can an individual to be assigned at a higher salary than a faculty already on the salary schedule with the same or more experience and education.

If there is no current match with the determined classification, then comparisons of salaries with individuals with similar years either within the same or in another education classification are identified.

Adjustments may be made for computation by selecting existing salaries from different classification categories by making a step allowance either upward or downward for the difference between the steps base pay rate. (ie: C-15 compared to a D-15)

Adjustments may also be determined by looking at the differences in salaries within the same category to determine a “per year” value that could be added or subtracted to the

comparable salary.

- 5) Once a suggested salary is determined, the CAO, Department Chairperson, CEA Representative, and the VP of Finance must approve the suggested salary before submitting hiring paperwork to the President for approval.

**IV. Effective Date(s)**

This procedure first became effective: October 28, 2014


Revised: June 16, 2016

Revised: September, 2020

Revised: July 17, 2023

Revised: August 26, 2025

**V. Signature and Title**

This procedure is implemented by: 

Title: Vice President for Academic Affairs