



**PROCEDURE FOR INSTITUTIONAL POLICY PE-02:
FACULTY EQUIVALENT TESTED EXPERIENCE**

1. PURPOSE AND STANDARD

- 1.1 This procedure establishes guidelines for determining qualified faculty and outlines the process for using equivalent tested experience to determine minimally qualified faculty at the West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine (“WVSOM”).
- 1.2 The Higher Learning Commission (“HLC”) requires institutions to ensure that their faculty have appropriate expertise in subjects they teach. HLC’s requirements regarding faculty qualification state that qualified faculty members are identified primarily by credentials (minimum degree requirements). HLC further states that institutions may consider other factors such as equivalent tested experience in determining whether a faculty member is qualified to teach specific subject matter. Equivalent tested experience may substitute for an earned credential or portions thereof.
- 1.3 When determining acceptable qualifications of its faculty, WVSOM gives primary consideration to the highest earned degree, which is normally a terminal degree in the discipline. In general, instructors are to possess 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 or where equivalent tested experience is established.
- 1.4 In some instances, there may be a generally accepted standard with regard to some disciplines that allows for a faculty member’s qualifications to be other than a terminal degree. Under HLC’s guidelines, an institution may deem a faculty member qualified based on experience that the institution determines is equivalent to the degree it would otherwise require for a faculty position. This experience should be tested experience in that it includes 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. Additionally, if a faculty member holds a master’s degree or higher in a discipline or subfield other than that in which they teach, that faculty member must have completed a minimum of 18 graduate credit hours in the discipline or subfield or qualify under equivalent tested experience. An academic subfield refers to a component of the discipline in which the instruction is delivered. The key consideration is whether a degree in the field or a focus in the specialization held by a faculty member appropriately matches the courses the faculty member would teach in accordance with the conventions of the academic field.

2. APPLICABILITY

- 2.1 This procedure applies to all individuals teaching courses at WVSOM, including part-time, adjunct, temporary, and/or non-tenure track faculty, with the following exceptions: graduate teaching assistants and clinical preceptors who are not listed as the instructor of record for a course.
- 2.2 WVSOM’s policies and procedures on advancement in faculty rank and tenure are not affected by this procedure.
- 2.3 WVSOM reserves the right to amend this procedure at any time, as necessary or appropriate.

3. EQUIVALENT TESTED EXPERIENCE

- 3.1 Equivalent tested experience means the depth and breadth of experience outside of the classroom in non-academic situations relevant to the discipline in which the faculty member would be teaching. This experience may be considered equivalent to the terminal degree in the discipline otherwise required for teaching in a subject area within a course.

3.2 WVSOM defines minimally acceptable equivalent tested experience as:

- 3.2.1 Having a terminal degree in any discipline, AND a nationally-recognized credential (certification, license, etc.) for the discipline or subfield (in those fields with such designation), AND recognition by their peers for distinguished professional accomplishments AND a minimum of five (5) years of tested experience in a related discipline to the course.
- 3.2.2 In certain circumstances, a faculty member may teach a doctoral-level course with a master's degree if they are recognized by their peers for distinguished professional accomplishments, AND are considered an expert in the content covered in the course, AND have a minimum of seven (7) years tested experience in a related field to the course. Examples of professional accomplishments include, but are not limited to, publications, research, awards, certifications, licensure, clinical experience, classroom or laboratory teaching experience, business degrees, etc.
- 3.2.3 Examples of information that may be used to document equivalent tested experience include but are not limited to:
 - a. A letter from a supervisor, administrator, or business owner confirming related work experience or other relevant documentation provided by an employer.
 - b. Client references if the faculty candidate is self-supervised or self-employed.
 - c. Current copy of appropriate licensure(s) or certification(s) in the discipline including expiration date and issuing agency.
 - d. Copy of honors or awards within the last seven years related to the appropriate discipline with date and awarding agency or institution, and if necessary, an explanation.
 - e. Copy of teaching awards, teaching evaluations, peer reviews from an institution of higher education. Documentation should include dates, institution, copy of teaching awards, evaluations with date and awarding agency or institution and listing of public speaking engagements.
 - f. Related research experience in industry or government agencies, PI or Co-PI for funded external grants, supervision of professional student research or other project-based activity in the discipline with official notification of award, letters of agreement, letters of reference, contracts or other appropriate documentation.
 - g. Record of peer-reviewed, refereed or invited publications, presented papers, author or co-author of textbooks, or other activities in the discipline with full citation in the CV.
 - h. Evidence of conducting professional training or documented demand for public speaking (e.g., invited lecturer, keynote speaker).
 - i. Documentation substantiating at least seven years of and substantial practical, professional or practitioner experience in a relevant field.

4. GENERAL PROVISIONS

- 4.1 Faculty qualifications may be determined in one of two ways: qualification by credential or qualification through equivalent tested experience.
 - 4.1.1 Qualification by Credential
 - a. Qualified faculty members are identified primarily by academic credentials.
 - b. Faculty must have a terminal degree determined by the discipline or subfield of the discipline, in which they teach, and/or for which they develop curricula.
 - c. If a faculty member holds a master's degree with a concentration in the teaching discipline (minimum of 18 graduate semester hours in the teaching discipline).

- d. If a faculty member holds a master's degree or terminal degree in a discipline or subfield other than that in which they are assigned to teach, that faculty member must have completed a minimum of eighteen (18) graduate credit hours in the discipline or subfield in which they are assigned to teach.

4.1.2 Qualification through Equivalent Tested Experience

Equivalent tested experience can substitute educational requirements establishing minimally qualified faculty if academic credentials set forth in Section 4.1.1 above are not met. Circumstances may arise in which the institution determines it is beneficial to hire or assign a full-time faculty member or instructor with specific experience that, when combined with educational credentials, provides an equivalent level of expertise to teach in the assigned course. The institution may grant an exception to the criteria in Section 4.1.1 above if an individual possesses the necessary breadth and depth of equivalent tested experience outside of the classroom in a real-world situation that is relevant to teach within a course.

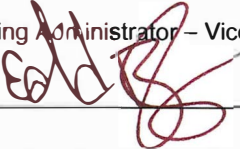

4.2 Hiring Process for New Faculty

- 4.2.1 Postings for faculty positions or solicitations must include notice of minimum qualifications consistent with this procedure.
- 4.2.2 A current curriculum vita, along with official academic transcripts or other documents verifying credentials, must be submitted to the Office of Human Resources prior to hire for all faculty positions. Records of the curriculum vita and academic credentials will be kept by the Office Human Resources for all faculty hires.
- 4.2.3 WVSOM's hiring process for faculty as outlined by the Office of Human Resources and Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean will be followed for selecting qualified candidates for interviews. This process will use the minimum qualifications for a faculty member outlined in this procedure when selecting and approving a candidate for hire.
- 4.2.4 During the recruitment phase of the selection process, a department chair or designee may request an exception to the criteria in Section 4.1.1 above based on equivalent tested experience. The written request along with all necessary supporting documentation must be submitted to the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean for review and approval or rejection.
- 4.2.5 After review, the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean will notify the Office of Human Resources in writing of the exception request determination to inform those involved in the hiring process.

4.3 Faculty Academic Assignments by Department Chairs

- 4.3.1 Faculty qualifications are reviewed by department chairs when making new academic teaching assignments to ensure that courses are staffed by faculty with appropriate credentials.
- 4.3.2 The Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean will perform a final review of new academic teaching assignments to ensure that courses are appropriately staffed.
- 4.3.3 Any written request by a department chair or designee for an exception based on equivalent tested experience along with all necessary supporting documentation must be submitted to the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean for review and approval or rejection.
- 4.3.4 The Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean shall notify the applicable department chair in writing of any approved exception request determination for faculty assignment to a course requiring an exception.

4.4 The Office of Human Resources shall maintain written documentation for current or future faculty members hired through equivalent tested experience verifying that they meet the minimum standards set forth in this procedure.

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