

# Minimum Qualifications for Academic Appointees with Instructional Responsibilities

BL-ACA-C10

## About This Policy

**Effective Dates:**

02-21-2017

**Last Updated:**

02-21-2017

**Responsible University Office:**

Office of the Vice Provost for Faculty & Academic Affairs

## Scope

All units/departments and instructors of record on the Bloomington campus.

## Policy Statement

The primary qualification for instructional appointees (i.e., “instructors”) are degrees earned from accredited academic institutions in the United States, or a college or university of equivalent quality outside the United States, in a field or subject area relevant to courses taught. Instructors not holding a relevant degree can be otherwise deemed qualified by tested experience if they are judged to meet well-defined unit/departmental policy and procedures that have been determined by the relevant faculty and approved by the relevant school or college and the Vice Provost for Faculty and Academic Affairs.

The default standard for all instructors is a terminal degree, or a degree at least one level higher than the degree for which a course being taught can be counted. Examples of the latter include a master’s degree to teach a course that counts toward a bachelor’s degree, or a doctoral degree to teach a course that counts toward a master’s degree. Exceptions include cases where the norm in the discipline (e.g., J.D. holders teaching Ph.D. students in law-related fields or M.F.A. degree holders teaching Ph.D. students in the arts) or the accreditation standards of the profession require otherwise.

Unit/departmental faculty will determine whether an instructor’s earned academic degree, or work toward an academic degree, is relevant for the discipline or field in which courses are taught. The importance of multidisciplinary to modern instruction in many fields should be kept in mind, however, as it may require different instructors who teach courses offered through the same department or program to have degrees in different, but relevant, areas. If an instructor holds no master’s degree or higher in a relevant discipline or field, the instructor should have completed a minimum of 18 graduate credit hours in a discipline or field relevant to their instruction areas. Instructors teaching in graduate programs should hold a relevant terminal degree (keeping in mind the above-stated importance of multidisciplinary instruction), and have a record of research, scholarship, or achievement appropriate for the graduate program.

Instructors who do not have the academic credentials described above can be otherwise qualified to teach courses if they possess substantial tested experience. The unit/departmental faculty shall have a policy clearly defining the criteria and procedures for assessing tested experience. Tested experience is typically not based exclusively on teaching experience in the relevant field or discipline. This policy must be approved by the relevant school or college and Vice Provost for Faculty and Academic Affairs. Determination of an instructor’s qualifications on the basis of tested experience will be the purview of the unit/departmental faculty where the courses are taught and subject to the approval of the relevant school or college and the Vice Provost for Faculty and Academic Affairs.

Some factors of tested experience that may be considered relevant include, but are not limited to:

- Substantial graduate-level academic coursework and/or methodological training in a discipline appropriate to the field of instruction
- A record of research, creative activity, scholarship, or achievement appropriate to the field of instruction
- Related research experience in industry and/or the private sector
- Practical experience in the art, business, legal, or political sector
- Relevant clinical experience
- Relevant certifications or additional credentials
- Demonstrated competency or fluency in a relevant skill or skill set

Any hiring decision based on tested experience shall be made with the goal of providing students with the best possible learning experience.

These instructional appointee minimum qualifications do not apply to graduate student appointees, each of whom works under the supervision of a qualified faculty member.

IUB and its units/departments are committed to working with current instructors who do not meet these minimum qualifications; this policy is not a mandate to terminate or no longer renew contracts. Unit/department heads and the instructional appointee, if otherwise performing well, shall devise a plan for meeting these requirements and have it approved by the relevant school or college and the Vice Provost for Faculty and Academic Affairs. Plan documentation and progress will be kept in the instructor's personnel record at the Office of the Vice Provost for Faculty and Academic Affairs.

The policy will be reviewed after three years by the BFC and when needed thereafter.

## Policy Summary

This policy creates a campus standard and sets common expectations for the appointment of all instructors teaching courses for academic credit at IUB. It also meets the new accreditation standards adopted by the Higher Learning Commission in June 2015.

## Procedure

Unit/departmental faculty will define the minimum threshold of experience for alternative qualification and an evaluation process to be used in the appointment process. This policy must be approved by the relevant school or college and the Vice Provost for Faculty and Academic Affairs. In non-departmentalized schools, the school faculty will define these qualifications and the evaluation process.

Documentation for instructors who are qualified by tested experience must be kept on file in the instructor's personnel record in the hiring unit/department or school.

## Definitions

**Tested Experience:** Tested experience is experience that the unit/departmental faculty, as approved by the relevant school or college and the Vice Provost for Faculty and Academic Affairs, determines is equivalent to the degree it would otherwise require for a faculty position. Tested experience should include experience outside the classroom in real-world situations appropriate for the subject the instructor would be teaching. Tested experience is typically not exclusively based on years of teaching experience.

**Instructor of Record:** The instructor of record for any given course is the primary instructor listed within the Student Information System. The academic unit assigns the instructor of record via the Schedule of Classes for each semester.

## History

This policy is required by the accreditation criteria established by the Higher Learning Commission for the 2017 accreditation process and was adopted in February 2017 after approval by the Bloomington Faculty Council.

## Related Information

[HLC Criteria for Accreditation CRRT.B.10010](#)  
[HLC guidelines for determining qualified faculty](#)