



Faculty Qualifications and Tested Experience Graduate Faculty

The University of Southern Indiana (USI) recognizes and adheres to the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) guidelines for determining qualified faculty through *HLC's Criteria for Accreditation and Assumed Practices* (B.2). USI employs competent faculty who are qualified to accomplish the mission and goals of the university. When determining acceptable qualifications of its graduate faculty, the university gives primary consideration to the highest earned degree, and for graduate programs this is a terminal degree in the discipline. This policy recognizes that 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 determined by the discipline and have a record of research, scholarship or achievement appropriate for the graduate program. HLC's Assumed Practice B.2 allows an institution to determine that a faculty member is qualified based on tested experience outside of the classroom in real-world situations relevant to the discipline in which the faculty member would be teaching. As a result, the university may consider as appropriate to the program and degree offered: research and scholarly work; competence; effectiveness; related work experience; certification(s); licensure; demonstrated competencies; and honors, awards, and achievements that contribute to effective teaching and learning outcomes. In situations where the faculty does not have the terminal degree in an appropriate discipline, the following guidelines may be used to determine tested experience:

1. Graduate faculty holding a master's degree in an appropriate discipline with national or state issued license or certification in the field and 2+ years of relevant work experience, may teach master's level courses.
2. Graduate faculty who teach master's level skill/activity based courses must hold a master's degree in an appropriate discipline and have 5+ years of performance experience or demonstrated mastery in the skill/activity based teaching area.
3. Graduate faculty who work in programs that hold national accreditation or have state board mandates must meet either the accreditation or state board expectations for graduate faculty credentials.
4. Graduate faculty who do not meet guidelines 1-3 above must show/demonstrate national or international discipline-based expertise through scholarly activities, including but not limited to: publications, presentations, professional engagement, consulting, honors, awards, continuing education, etc.

For faculty who are deemed qualified to teach graduate programs for USI by way of tested experience, documentation must be completed to provide a rationale and proper approvals.