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# Faculty Credentials Policy

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**Version:** 3.0

**Responsible University Official:** Provost

**Effective Date:** March 1, 2024

## 1.0 Introduction

This policy establishes:

- University-wide degree academic credentials necessary for faculty to teach or design SLU academic, credit-bearing courses
- Parameters and requirements for the establishment of college- or department-level policies governing experience-based on exceptions to the University-wide degree qualifications

This policy does not address other required faculty qualifications, beyond minimum academic credentials, that may be required by academic units or the University.

## 2.0 Scope

This policy governs faculty assignments for all courses for academic credit at SLU, in all colleges and schools, at all course locations, via all modalities, and at both the undergraduate and graduate levels.

The only SLU faculty excluded from this policy are formally-designated teaching assistants enrolled in graduate programs and whose teaching is designed to be regularly guided and supervised by faculty.

## 3.0 Policy Statements

**3.1** All SLU academic units/programs may establish minimum faculty academic credentials that exceed, but cannot be lower than, those established herein. Such qualification standards should be formally codified and adopted by the appropriate departmental or college faculty governance body; compliance with such standards should be regularly monitored and documented to ensure equity in faculty hiring and assignment of teaching responsibilities.

**3.2** Except as provided for in Sections 3.4 (see below), all faculty officially assigned to teach or design credit-bearing courses at SLU must minimally meet the following educational qualifications:

**To teach undergraduate-level courses (0000 to 4999)**

- An earned master's degree (or higher-level degree) in a discipline or interdisciplinary field of study relevant to each course(s) to which the faculty member is assigned.

**OR**

- An earned master's degree (or higher-level degree) in any discipline or interdisciplinary field of study that either a) included or b) was supplemented by an additional 18 graduate-level credit

hours earned in a discipline or interdisciplinary field of study relevant to each course(s) to which the faculty member is assigned.

**NOTE:** For credit to be considered “graduate-level credit,” it must be officially designated as such by the registrar’s office at the institution at which it was earned. For example, at SLU, only credit earned for courses numbered 5000 and above is officially designated as “graduate credit.” Undergraduate-level courses accepted to count toward the completion of a graduate program at SLU or another institution will not be considered “graduate level” credit by SLU for the purposes of faculty qualifications. This stipulation pertains to anyone who initially applies to teach a SLU course on/after the effective date of this policy.

### **To teach graduate-level courses (5000 to 9000)**

- An earned doctoral degree in a discipline or interdisciplinary field of study relevant to each course(s) to which the faculty member is assigned (**OR** an earned degree clearly determined to be the "terminal degree" by peers in the discipline relevant to each course(s) to which the faculty member is assigned);

**AND**

- A record of research, scholarship, or other form of profession-related achievement appropriate for the graduate program(s) in which any assigned courses are offered.

**3.3** The “relevance” (as referred to in Section 3.2 above) of an earned degree or its component courses to the course(s) to which a faculty member is assigned to teach is to be determined by the academic leader directly responsible for a specific faculty member’s hiring and teaching assignment(s); that determination should be made in consultation with academic unit peers as governed by the policies and procedures of the respective academic unit.

**3.4** Faculty who do not meet the minimum academic credentials as detailed in Section 3.1 above may be deemed qualified based on having a sufficient amount of other types of *pertinent professional experience* (either solely or in combination with some amount of appropriate academic coursework and/or degrees) determined to be equivalent to the degree otherwise required.

*Pertinent professional experience* may include the following:

- Professional work experience (non-teaching) that includes a breadth and depth of experience in professional situations closely relevant to the course(s) to which the faculty member would be assigned.
- Experience teaching courses very similar to those which the faculty member would be assigned at SLU. Note that previous similar teaching experience *alone* – regardless of duration – is explicitly *not* sufficient; such experience must be meaningfully augmented by substantive amounts of other forms of pertinent professional experience.

**3.5** Whether a faculty member has or does not have *sufficient pertinent professional experience* (as referred to in Section 3.4 above) is to be determined by the academic leader directly responsible for a specific faculty member’s hiring and teaching assignment(s); that determination should be made in consultation with academic unit peers as governed by the policies and procedures of the respective academic unit.

**3.6** Any determination of sufficient pertinent professional experience must be made in full compliance with a written policy established at the department or college level that includes the following:

- Discipline-specific criteria (or criteria appropriate to an interdisciplinary field of study) establishing a minimum threshold of *pertinent professional experience* (including, but not limited to, specific academic experiences/credits earned, certifications, demonstrated skills, professional development experiences, engagement in professional organizations and learned societies, scholarly/professional publications and presentations, and other forms of closely relevant professional experiences).
- A system by which pertinent professional experience is consistently and transparently evaluated by faculty peers in the appropriate academic unit.
- Confirmation that the policy itself was vetted with and formally approved by the appropriate departmental or college faculty governance body.

#### 4.0 Creation and Maintenance of Faculty Qualifications Records

**4.1** SLU's Office of Faculty Affairs shall maintain all academic transcripts submitted to it as part of the faculty hiring process. All degrees awarded as documented on those transcripts shall be recorded in the central data system (Banner or its successor).

**4.2** Records of determination of "relevance" for individual faculty per Section 3.3 shall be maintained by the academic units in which such determinations are made; the records must be easily retrievable and available for review upon request by accrediting body representatives, the respective dean and related staff, and the Provost and related staff.

**4.3** Records of determination of "pertinent professional experience" for individual faculty per Sections 3.4-3.6 shall be maintained by the academic units in which such determinations are made; the records must be easily retrievable and available for review upon request by accrediting body representatives, the respective dean and related staff, and the Provost and related staff.

**4.4** Copies of academic unit policies establishing "relevance" of "pertinent professional experience" (per Sections 3.3-3.6) will be stored centrally by the Office of the Provost.

#### 6.0 Approvals

This policy was:

1. Originally approved by CADD: September 18, 2019
2. Originally approved by Provost: September 18, 2019
3. Re-formatted (no text changes) on 4-5-2021 to make qualifications for teaching graduate-level courses more clear
4. Updated (with CADD and Provost approval) on 2-28-24 to include the "Note" in Section 3.2, the addition of 4.4, and the minor name change from "Qualifications" to "Credentials."