



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY

Operating Policy and Procedure

OP 32.36: Certification of Faculty Qualifications

DATE: October 15, 2018

PURPOSE: The purpose of this Operating Policy/Procedure (OP) is to document the qualifications of faculty, including instructors, teaching assistants, and graduate part-time instructors (GPTIs), to perform instruction at various levels.

REVIEW: This OP is effective immediately and will be reviewed in June of even-numbered years by the Vice Provost for Faculty Success with substantive revisions forwarded to the Provost and Senior Vice President.

POLICY/PROCEDURE

1. Policy

- a. In this OP, the *Principles* refer to the *Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement* of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges, 2012 or subsequent current editions of the *Principles*.
- b. Selection, development, and retention of competent faculty at all academic levels are of major importance to the educational quality at Texas Tech University.
- c. All faculty appointments, including instructors, teaching assistants, and GPTIs, and subsequent assignment of duties must be in accordance with the qualifications stated in the *Principles* and any associated policies or guidelines.

2. Definition of Qualifications

a. Baccalaureate Faculty

All full-time and part-time faculty members (instructors of record) teaching courses leading toward the baccalaureate degree, other than physical education activity courses, must have completed at least 18 graduate semester hours in the teaching discipline or hold at least a master's degree or equivalent credential, following current SACSCOC standards and guidelines. Outstanding professional experience and demonstrated contributions to the teaching discipline may be presented on an exceptional basis in lieu of formal academic preparation. Such individual cases must be justified as herein provided.

Appropriate credentials for teaching interdisciplinary courses may vary. The academic and professional preparation of faculty members teaching in such courses or programs must be documented and justified, as provided herein, on a case-by-case basis.

b. Graduate Faculty

Each faculty member (instructor of record) teaching courses at the master's and specialist degree level is expected to hold the terminal degree, usually the earned doctorate, in the teaching discipline or a related discipline. In some instances, the master's degree in the discipline may be considered the terminal degree, while in others, a master's degree in the discipline coupled with a doctorate in a related discipline may be appropriate. In the latter cases, the master's degree, or master's degree coupled with a related earned doctorate, must be justified as the terminal degree as provided herein. (See attached *Certification of Faculty Qualifications* form.)

Each faculty member (instructor of record) teaching at the doctoral graduate level is expected to hold the terminal degree, usually the earned doctorate, in the teaching discipline or a related discipline. However, in unusual cases, at the request of the department offering the course and with the prior approval of both the appropriate academic dean and the Graduate Dean, individuals who hold a master's degree and who have demonstrated exceptional scholarly or creative activity or substantial professional experience in the area of their proposed teaching assignment may be approved to teach doctoral courses. In these cases, the master's degree and additional qualifications must be justified as equivalent to the appropriate terminal degree as provided herein (see attached *Certification of Faculty Qualifications* form).

The terminal degree generally represents the most advance degree available within an academic discipline, and it should comply with any stated policies regarding identification of the terminal degree promulgated by a discipline-specific professional organization or accreditor.

Appropriate credentials for teaching interdisciplinary graduate courses may vary. The academic and professional preparation of faculty members teaching in such courses or programs must be documented and justified, as provided herein, on a case-by-case basis (see attached *Certification of Faculty Qualifications* form).

c. Graduate Teaching Assistants

Graduate teaching assistants who have primary responsibility (i.e., serve as instructor of record) for teaching a baccalaureate-level course for credit and/or assigning grades must have earned at least 18 graduate hours in the teaching discipline. Those not meeting the requirements for baccalaureate faculty described in section 2.a must also be under the direct supervision of a faculty member experienced in the teaching discipline, receive regular in-service training, and be evaluated regularly.

The requirements above do not apply to non-instructor-of-record graduate teaching assistants engaged in assignments such as teaching physical education activities, assisting in laboratory sessions, attending or helping prepare lectures, paper grading, keeping class records, and conducting discussion groups.

Graduate teaching assistants for whom English is a second language may be appointed only when a test of spoken English or other reliable evidence demonstrates proficiency in oral and written communication. Satisfactory completion of the summer workshop, described more fully in [OP 64.03, Graduate Students Employed as Teaching Assistants and Graduate Part-time Instructors](#), is required for all international graduate teaching assistants.

3. **Procedure**

- a. The request for appointment is initiated by the department chairperson and recommended by the dean of the instructional school or college and by the Graduate Dean. In the case of faculty holding professor titles and research personnel holding research professor titles (i.e., research assistant professor, research associate professor, and research professor), the principal investigator recommends the appointment to the chairperson. At the time of appointment, official faculty transcripts, curriculum vitae, and proof of authorization to work in the United States must be sent to the appropriate personnel in the Office of the Provost with a request for an official offer letter. Please refer to [OP 32.16, Faculty Recruitment Procedure](#), for hiring/appointment procedures. It is the responsibility of the department chair or area coordinator of the department/area to which the faculty member is appointed to obtain the official transcripts and the vita from the faculty member.
- b. The request for appointment is initiated by the department chairperson and recommended by the dean of the instructional school or college and by the Graduate Dean. In the case of research personnel who do not hold professor titles (e.g., research aide, research assistant, research assistant-external, research associate, research scientist, senior research associate, and any other similar non-exempt research titles), the principal investigator recommends the appointment to the chairperson. At the time of appointment, official faculty transcripts, curriculum vitae, and proof of authorization to work in the United States must be on file with Human Resources, which is considered the permanent official record. It is the responsibility of the department chair or area coordinator of the department/area to which the faculty member is appointed to obtain the official transcripts and the vita from the faculty member.
- c. Faculty appointments of individuals who have completed all requirements for the doctoral degree except the dissertation must be made in accordance with [OP 32.28, Faculty Applicants Not Holding Doctoral Degrees in Departments/Areas Requiring the Doctorate](#).
- d. Initial appointment of all faculty, including instructors, teaching assistants, and GPTIs, must be accompanied by a *Certification of Faculty Qualifications* as attached to this OP. Subsequent events that result in a change in qualifications are to be documented through submission of a revised certification form. All submissions are to be accompanied by supporting documentation, such as official transcripts and letters attesting to qualifications or achievement.

Certification forms are to be placed in the faculty personnel file with Human Resources, which is considered the permanent official record, and the forms must be available for official reporting purposes. Official transcripts for all tenure-track and tenured faculty are also required to be on file with Human Resources.

[Attachment: Certification of Faculty Qualifications](#)