

**Applies to:** Faculty

**Responsible Office**

**Academic Affairs**

### POLICY STATEMENT

The College employs competent faculty members qualified to accomplish the mission and priorities of the institution. Consistent faculty credentialing procedures and careful consideration of qualifications for all instructional faculty demonstrates academic integrity and a commitment to effective teaching and learning. Faculty are essential in the oversight of the curriculum and expectations for student performance as well as critical involvement in assessment of student learning. Hiring qualified faculty assures that students have access to faculty members who are experts in the subject matter they teach and who can communicate knowledge in that subject to their students.

### Purpose of the Policy

It is the policy of Central Ohio Technical College that all teaching faculty have the appropriate credentials and expertise in the subjects they teach. This policy applies to all teaching locations and delivery modalities. It is designed to guide the institution in ensuring that qualifications of all faculty members are in compliance with the guidelines for determining qualified faculty as outlined by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) and that the College is providing high-quality education wherever and however its offerings are delivered.

### Definitions

Term	Definition
Academic subfield	Components of the discipline in which the instruction is delivered. For example, in Business, the subfields include management, marketing, accounting, and finance.
Tested experience	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.

### Policy Details

#### I. Minimum Qualifications Aligned with HLC Guidelines

The College verifies faculty qualifications on a course-by-course basis through the evaluation of appropriate credentials and professional history to ensure quality learning experiences for students, while recognizing these qualifications may differ depending on the type of coursework. Faculty 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 when equivalent experience is established.

Credentials (primarily degrees or certificates) from a regionally accredited institution of higher education, are the primary means by which COTC ascertains faculty qualifications. The College verifies faculty qualifications through the evaluation of official transcripts.

#### A. Occupational Degrees (Associate of Applied Sciences, Associate of Applied Business, and Associate of Technical Study) and Certificates

COTC offers Associates of Applied Science (AAS) degrees in a wide range of areas. These degrees prepare students for direct employment upon graduation. Many of these academic areas also offer certificates. These certificates also prepare students for direct employment upon completion.

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COTC's standard for faculty teaching technical courses as a required part of an Associates of Applied Science (AAS), Associate of Applied Business (AAB), or certificates in a career technical field is a minimum of a Bachelor's degree OR a combination of appropriate and relevant education, training and **tested experience**. Faculty members teaching in an associate degree program for which the degree is the terminal degree who hold that degree are considered to meet the minimal credential standard and are not subject to this requirement.

Additional academic degrees, licenses, and certification may be required per program accreditation and /or industry standards. Industry licensure/certification or other credential required or considered essential for practice in the industry directly related to the credential field shall be incorporated into the minimum qualifications. Standards for faculty credentials established by state or national program accreditation bodies may be incorporated into the minimum qualifications.

**B. Transfer-Level Courses**

COTC offers Associate of Arts and Associate of Science degrees. The standard for faculty teaching classes that transfer to a baccalaureate-granting institution is a master's degree from a regionally-accredited institution of higher education in the discipline, or a master's degree and a minimum of 18 graduate credit hours in the discipline or academic subfield. When evaluating credentials of faculty who have obtained a Master of Education degree, but not a master's degree in a discipline, graduate-level courses in the discipline and methods courses that are specifically for the teaching of the discipline may be considered for meeting the 18 graduate credit hour minimum.

**C. Developmental Education Courses**

Faculty members teaching developmental education courses must hold a bachelor's degree or higher in the discipline taught or a related discipline.

**D. Tested Experience**

Using experience as a method for qualifying teaching faculty is used judiciously and is not construed as standard practice. In exceptional cases, tested experience may substitute for an earned credential or portions thereof. A faculty member may have a breadth and depth of experience outside of the classroom in real-world situations relevant to the discipline in which the faculty member teaches that clearly contributes to student learning outcomes and can be considered equivalent to the credentials that are ordinarily required of faculty in that content area.

*Tested experience can only be used for faculty teaching technical courses in pre-identified technical programs, highly applied or highly skilled, non-TAG or non-OTM-approved general education (non-technical) courses, or TAG approved foreign and sign language courses.* This allowance is in line with HLC guidelines that allows an individual's knowledge and expertise to be determined by their tested experiences.

1. College metric for tested experience for highly applied or highly skilled, non-TAG or non-OTM-approved general education (non-technical) and TAG-approved foreign and sign language courses:
  - a. Bachelor's degree in the field of the course being taught, and
  - b. Relevant and significant professional experience, demonstrated by one or more of the following:
    - 1.) At least five years of managerial or executive-level professional (non-teaching) experience or highly applied technical experience in the field of the course being taught;
    - 2.) Licensure and at least five years of clinical/professional (non-teaching) experience in the field of the course being taught;

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- 3.) At least 18 credit hours of graduate-level academic coursework in the field of the course being taught plus at least four years of significant professional experience in the field of the course being taught;
  - 4.) Industry-recognized academic certificate (that involves at least 18 credit hours) in the field of the course being taught plus at least four years of significant professional experience in the field of the course being taught;
  - 5.) Demonstrated fluency (using the proficiency standards of the American Council on Teaching of Foreign Languages) in the foreign language being taught.
2. Metrics for tested experience for faculty teaching *technical courses* in pre-identified technical programs who do not hold an applied associate degree in the occupational degree program OR without a bachelor's degree in the discipline are defined by program. A listing of technical programs for which tested experience may be accepted including the program-specific metrics is available in the *Resources* section of this policy.

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**PROCEDURE**

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- I. Upon identifying candidates who are eligible to teach, the Director of Academic Operations will review transcripts and other supporting materials to make an initial determination of the candidate's qualifications. Credentials and experience will be compared against the criteria needed to teach the requested course(s).
  - A. Unofficial transcripts may be used to initially credential a faculty member; however, the individual must provide within 30 days of the first day of classes during their first semester of teaching at the College an official transcript from each institution that awarded credit in the discipline for which confirmation is required. The same standard of practice may be used for alternative credentialing materials, when unofficial copies may be used initially but official copies are required within 30 days of the first day of classes during their first semester of teaching at the College. Faculty who fail to produce official transcripts and/or alternative credentials will not be allowed to teach after one semester.
    1. The degree, major, completion date, and relevant graduate coursework will be highlighted on transcripts and attached to the Faculty Credential Verification form.
    2. When reviewing graduate transcripts that include quarter hours in the teaching discipline, the conversion formula is 0.667 semester hours for each quarter hour.
- II. If it is determined the candidate is qualified to teach, the Director of Academic Operations will complete a Faculty Credential Verification form to include:
  - A. The approved teaching discipline and all courses the candidate is qualified to teach.
  - B. Only those degrees and coursework used to credential the faculty member will be listed on the Faculty Credential Verification form (in most cases that will be the highest degree awarded).
  - C. Any relevant certifications, valid licenses, and verified work experience will be listed and included with the Faculty Credential Verification form.
- III. Unofficial transcripts
- IV. The completed and approved form will be submitted to the Vice President for Academic Affairs for review and approval.
  - A. If approved, the information will be loaded into the Student Information System (Institutions Attended Summary screen).
  - B. Once the faculty member is credentialed and loaded into the electronic database, faculty may be assigned to courses. No faculty [full-time, part-time (including College Credit Plus)] may be assigned to courses until the faculty credentialing process is complete.
- V. When a faculty member has not taught for five (5) consecutive years, the faculty credentialing process must be completed again upon rehire. (NOTE: The credentialing process must be complete before course assignments will be made).

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- VI. When faculty are already credentialed to teach, any updates to add new courses to the Faculty Credential Verification form need only be completed by the Director of Academic Operations and indicated as an “Update to the original Faculty Credential Verification form” on the form. An updated form will be included as an addendum to the original form in the academic affairs portion of the faculty member’s personnel file.
- VII. In the rare case when a faculty member has been assigned to a course for which he or she is not already credentialed to teach, the Director of Academic Operations must complete an updated Faculty Credential Verification form prior to the first day of class. For any faculty who has unresolved course credentialing issues on the first day of classes of the semester, the faculty member will be removed from the schedule or have approval from the Vice President for Academic Affairs to keep the faculty assigned to courses for that semester only.

**Responsibilities**

Position or Office	Responsibilities
Director of Academic Operations (for full-time faculty)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Review official transcripts.</li> <li>2. Review documentation of relevant training and tested experience.</li> <li>3. Document findings on the Faculty Credential Verification form.</li> <li>4. Submit credentialing recommendations and supporting documentation to the Vice President for Academic Affairs for review and approval.</li> </ol>
Vice President for Academic Affairs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Approves Faculty Credential Verification forms and supporting documentation to determine credential status of each faculty member.</li> <li>2. Signs Faculty Credential Verification form indicating status.</li> </ol>
Administrative support staff in the Office of Academic Affairs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Enters faculty qualification information into the Student Information System.</li> <li>2. File Faculty Credential Verification form and supporting documentation in the academic personnel file.</li> </ol>

**Resources**

Faculty Credential Verification form,  
[http://webprod.cotc.edu/Academics/Documents/FAC\\_CREDEN\\_VERI\\_FORM\\_MASTER%20update.pdf](http://webprod.cotc.edu/Academics/Documents/FAC_CREDEN_VERI_FORM_MASTER%20update.pdf)

Determining Qualified Faculty Through HLC’s Criteria for Accreditation and Assumed Practices, Guidelines for Institutions and Peer Reviewers, [http://download.hlcommission.org/FacultyGuidelines\\_2016\\_OPB.pdf](http://download.hlcommission.org/FacultyGuidelines_2016_OPB.pdf)

Technical programs for which tested experience may be accepted,  
<http://webprod.cotc.edu/Academics/Documents/Technical%20Programs%20for%20which%20tested%20experience%20may%20be%20accepted.pdf>

**Contacts**

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Policy interpretation	Academic Affairs	740-755-7704 740-755-7327	<a href="mailto:weirick.7@cotc.edu">weirick.7@cotc.edu</a>

**History (required)**

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