

Minnesota State University, Mankato  
University Policy

<b>Policy Name:</b> Faculty Credentials	<b>Effective Date of Last Review:</b> August 1, 2025
<b>Custodian of Policy:</b> Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs	<b>Date of Last Review:</b> September 2024
<b>Date of Adoption:</b> August 1, 2025	<b>Date of Next Review:</b> September 2024

Minnesota State Mankato is responsible for ensuring that faculty in each of its educational programs are qualified to teach courses they are assigned. Faculty must be capable of understanding and conveying the essentials of a specific discipline in a collegiate environment, design and teach courses that meet approved learning outcomes for the course and program, and possess the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that reflect the needs of graduates in those disciplines. For the purpose of credentialing, instructional faculty includes teaching assistants, concurrent enrollment teachers, and individuals holding adjunct, fixed term, probationary, and tenured appointments.

An official transcript must be on file with Human Resources for the duration of the faculty member's employment. Transcripts for graduate teaching assistants may be submitted to the hiring department, stored in a secure location during the term of employment, and then destroyed according to university protocols for document destruction.

Instructors may be qualified using one or more of the following methods:

- Achievement of academic credentials
- Progress toward academic credentials
- Equivalent experience

### Achievement of academic credentials

Faculty teaching general education or undergraduate level courses must possess a master's or doctoral degree in the teaching discipline from an accredited university. Alternatively, they may hold any graduate degree plus a minimum of 18 graduate credits in the teaching discipline.

Faculty teaching doctoral, master's, and post-baccalaureate level courses must possess a doctoral degree in the teaching discipline or a related discipline from an accredited university and have a record of recognized research, scholarship, creative activity, or achievement in

professional practices appropriate for the graduate program. More information is available in the College of Graduate Studies and Research Graduate Faculty Policy.

## Progress toward academic credentials

Teaching assistants, concurrent enrollment instructors, and full-time faculty may teach for a limited time while working toward the achievement of academic credentials. They must be enrolled in a graduate program and making demonstrable, consistent progress toward completing the degree. The term of eligibility will be established at the time of hire in consultation with the dean of the academic college, and the expectation is that the faculty will eventually become qualified under another basis in this policy.

Graduate teaching assistants must have direct supervision by a faculty member experienced in the teaching discipline, regular in-service training, and periodic evaluations.

## Equivalent experience

An instructor may demonstrate equivalent professional or specialized experience that is commensurate with achievement of academic credentials. The depth and breadth of experience outside of the classroom in non-academic situations must be relevant to the discipline in which the faculty member would be teaching. The form of equivalent experience may differ by discipline or academic program. The criteria for eligibility must be established in consultation with the academic dean prior to recruiting instructors.

Criteria for equivalent experience may include the following:

- Defined years of occupational experience
- Research and/or scholarship
- Recognized achievement
- State and/or national industry certifications or licenses
- Other activities relevant to the teaching discipline

Previous years of classroom instruction does not constitute equivalent experience on its own.

Faculty who work in programs that hold national accreditation or have state board mandates must meet either the accreditation or state board expectations for faculty credentials.

## Exceptions

### **Emergency Hires**

A department may hire an individual in response to emergency situations with approval from the dean of the academic college (or their designee) and the Provost (or their designee). An

individual in an emergency hire may be employed for no more than two consecutive semesters. Emergency hires may include the following situations:

- illness, accident, or death of a faculty member during the term, resulting in a faculty member being unable to finish teaching the course;
- a failed search for a faculty position, if the position has been advertised at least twice;
- resignation of a faculty member immediately prior to start of a term;
- addition of course sections immediately prior to start of a term; or
- immediate deployment in the armed services.

### **Emerging fields**

An exception may be made in instances where the program area is so new that the educational preparation requirements and the occupational experience requirements are not yet clearly defined. This exception must terminate when the system minimum qualifications are established.

## **Rationale**

The university must ensure that faculty in each of its educational programs are qualified to teach courses they are assigned.