Verification of Faculty Credentials
Policy Statement

Policy

It is the policy of Western Michigan University that faculty teaching at the graduate level shall have (a) earned a terminal degree, (b) provided evidence of appropriate professional experience equivalent to such degree, or (c) provided evidence of tested experience appropriate to the specific teaching assignment.

Furthermore, it is the policy of Western Michigan University that faculty teaching at the undergraduate level shall have (a) earned a minimum of a master’s degree, (b) provided evidence of appropriate professional experience equivalent to such degree, or (c) provided documentation of tested experience appropriate to the specific teaching assignment.

Guidance regarding these criteria is contained in the Higher Learning Commission document, “Commission Guidance on Determining Qualified Faculty.” A copy of that document is attached.

Scope

This policy applies to all instructors of record and to all those who hold academic rank and tenure. Thus, it applies to full-time and part-time faculty, adjunct faculty, visiting faculty, academic department chairs and directors, deans and associate deans, the provost and vice-provosts. It also applies to university staff if assigned as an instructor of record either on an overload assignment or as part of their staff appointment. Emeriti faculty are not required to comply unless assigned as an instructor of record.

All academic degrees earned in the U.S. shall have been awarded by regionally accredited institutions, and faculty shall provide documentation thereof. For faculty whose degrees are earned abroad, official transcripts must be submitted to and evaluated by the designated staff in the Diether H. Haenicke Institute for Global Education (HIGE) to verify the authenticity of the academic documents and demonstrate their comparability with U.S. credentials.

Effective Date

Effective July 1, 2009, all new faculty hires, as defined in the scope above, must provide an official transcript that verifies the highest earned degree from a regionally accredited institution or a final official transcript of a degree earned abroad evaluated for authenticity and comparability by HIGE. Faculty who complete a higher earned degree after employment must provide a new official transcript to verify the awarding of the additional degree.

Effective January 15, 2010, all others defined in the scope of this policy must comply with the same documentation requirements.
**Accountability**

Candidates for faculty positions are responsible for assuring that the official transcripts are submitted to the chair/director of the academic home department upon request. Candidates are also responsible for providing evidence to the department chair/director of licensure and/or certification in disciplines where such credentials are required. This documentation may be received no later than the return date of acceptance of the letter of offer. A candidate’s failure to provide such documentation in a timely manner or falsification or misrepresentation of credentials will subject the appointment to discipline up to and including termination.

Department chairs/directors are responsible for extending offers of employment contingent upon receipt of the final official transcript and/or documentation of professional experience and additional licensure and/or certification. The department chair/director is responsible for forwarding the official transcripts of degrees awarded abroad to HIGE staff and following up on any concerns before forwarding the verification documents to the dean. Chairs/directors, and HIGE as appropriate, shall verify all faculty credentials no later than the effective date of employment.

The dean or dean’s designee is responsible for the verification and validation of all faculty credential requirements and for the accurate and timely completion of the *Verification of Faculty Credential Form*, which is to be forwarded to the Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. All official transcripts are to be kept on file in the dean’s office.

The provost or provost’s designee is responsible for maintaining an electronic database of faculty credentials and auditing the records on an annual basis.

Note: For those whose highest earned degree was awarded by WMU, an official transcript will not be required. The appropriate department will obtain degree verification from the registrar’s office.