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SECTION I. PURPOSE

This policy is intended to fulfill institutional accreditation obligations by assuring the definition and verification of minimum standard qualifications for faculty teaching University of St. Thomas courses.

SECTION II. SCOPE AND APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to all St. Thomas academic units and their administrators. It governs the qualifications of all faculty teaching credit-bearing courses.

SECTION III. DEFINITIONS

When used in this policy, the following terms have the following meanings:

1. **Administrator** means a school or college dean or associate dean; a department chair; the director or associate director of an academic program, center or institute; or the administrative leader of any other academic unit.
2. **Academic unit** means a St. Thomas school, college, academic department or program, center or institute.
3. **Credit-bearing course** means a course identified in the St. Thomas course catalog that (a) is offered by St. Thomas for academic credit, or (b) is required as an accompaniment to a course offered by St. Thomas for academic credit (e.g., a laboratory section), or (c) bears no academic credit but is required or counted by St. Thomas as part of a credit-bearing program, in each case regardless of the mode of course delivery.
4. **Faculty** means tenured, tenure-track, non-tenure-track, clinical, visiting, limited term, and adjunct faculty who teach one or more credit-bearing courses.
5. **Minimum standard qualifications** means the minimum credentials that faculty must possess in order to demonstrate that they have the appropriate knowledge and expertise to teach credit-bearing courses in a particular academic unit.

SECTION IV. DETERMINATION OF MINIMUM STANDARD QUALIFICATIONS

A. Development, Approval and Recordkeeping

In consultation with the applicable dean, each academic unit that offers credit-bearing courses must define, document and obtain approval of minimum standard qualifications for faculty teaching credit-bearing courses in the academic unit (and any modifications to such qualifications), in accordance with applicable school or college policies, the regular faculty governance process for the academic unit, and the requirements below.

Promptly following such approval, each academic unit must submit a copy of its minimum standard qualifications to the St. Thomas Office of Accreditation and Assessment. Each academic unit also must maintain a record of its current minimum standard qualifications, and any prior version that applied during the most recent six (6) years, within the academic unit.

Academic units that do not meet all requirements of this Section IV.A will be treated as having approved the non-discretionary academic credentials described in Section IV.B as the academic unit's minimum standard qualifications.

B. Content

An academic unit's minimum standard qualifications must include the non-discretionary academic credentials set forth in this Section IV.B. At the academic unit's discretion, its minimum standard qualifications also may include closely related academic credentials and equivalent credentials defined by the academic unit, as further described in this Section IV.B.

1. Academic Credentials for Undergraduate Courses

For undergraduate courses (enrolling only associate and/or baccalaureate degree students), faculty will be considered to meet minimum standard qualifications if they have earned a master's degree or higher in the discipline being taught, or in any discipline with at least eighteen (18) graduate credit hours in the discipline being taught.

At an academic unit's discretion, faculty will be considered to meet minimum standard qualifications if they have earned a master's degree or higher in a closely related field, as defined by the academic unit or accrediting body, or in any discipline with at least eighteen (18) graduate credit hours in a closely related field, as defined by the academic unit or accrediting body.

2. Academic Credentials for Graduate Courses

For graduate courses and for cross-listed undergraduate/graduate courses, faculty will be considered to meet minimum standard qualifications if they:

- have earned a terminal degree in the discipline being taught or have completed all requirements for the doctoral degree in the discipline being taught minus dissertation defense (i.e., ABD); and
- have a record of scholarship appropriate for the graduate program.

At an academic unit's discretion, faculty will be considered to meet minimum standard qualifications if they:

- have earned a terminal degree in a closely related field, as defined by the academic unit or accrediting body, or, for fields in which the master's degree is considered the terminal degree, a doctorate in a related field, as defined by the academic unit or accrediting body; and
- have a record of scholarship appropriate for the graduate program.

3. Equivalent Credentials

Academic units have discretion to define equivalent credentials that will be considered to meet minimum standard qualifications if a faculty member does not have the requisite academic credentials. Equivalent credentials may include, for example, relevant licensure or certification;

honors, awards or other recognition; work or teaching experience; research record; or graduate-level course work. Equivalent credentials are subject to approval by the applicable dean and the vice provost for academic affairs.

SECTION V. EVALUATION OF INDIVIDUAL FACULTY QUALIFICATIONS

A. Evaluation Required Prior to Appointment

Prior to issuing an offer of appointment to a prospective faculty member, and prior to requesting faculty outside the academic unit to teach a credit-bearing course in the academic unit, the academic unit administrator must review, verify and document that the faculty member meets the academic unit's minimum standard qualifications.

Hiring academic units must maintain records of such verification for the duration of the faculty member's employment plus six (6) years. Academic units that request faculty outside the academic unit to teach a credit-bearing course must maintain records of such verification for the duration of the faculty member's teaching appointment in the academic unit plus six (6) years.

B. Exceptions for Adjunct Faculty Teaching Laboratory Sections

Adjunct faculty members who do not meet an academic unit's minimum standard qualifications may be approved by the applicable dean (or designee) to instruct non-credit-bearing laboratory sections of credit-bearing lecture courses, if the laboratory and lecture sections have different instructors and the following conditions are met and documented by the academic unit:

- Faculty instructing the laboratory section have appropriate (or discipline-specific) post-degree training and a degree at least at the same level that the students in the laboratory section are seeking, so long as faculty instructing associate of arts students have at least a baccalaureate degree;
- The instructor of record for the credit-bearing course meets the academic unit's minimum standard qualifications based on the instructor of record's academic credentials;
- The instructor of record for the credit-bearing course has regular interaction with, and guidance of, the faculty instructing the laboratory sections; and
- The instructor of record for the credit-bearing course is responsible for final assessment of the students in the course, including assigning grades.

C. Other Exceptions

On rare occasions, prospective faculty may be deemed to have the appropriate knowledge and expertise to teach a credit-bearing course based on credentials other than the academic unit's minimum standard qualifications. Reliance on credentials other than minimum standard qualifications requires the prior written approval of the vice provost for academic affairs, in consultation with the applicable dean. The approval and verification of such other credentials must be documented and retained by the academic unit consistent with the other recordkeeping requirements of this policy.