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	Issued: (original policy date) May 4, 2017	Revised: (date) Click here to enter text.

Policy Title: *Faculty Qualification Hiring Policy and Interpretive Guidance*

Policy Status: New

Revision

Supersedes existing policy titled: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Deletion

Policy Purpose/Reason: Building on CMU’s degrees for tenured and tenure-track faculty (approved by the Trustees in March 2012), the proposed Faculty Qualifications policy and accompanying Interpretive Guidance (See Appendix A.1 and A.2) are brought forward for the purposes of documenting CMU’s commitment to academic quality through the hiring of qualified faculty and assuring the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) that CMU’s faculty hiring criteria and process are consistent with HLC scholarly and degree expectations. The HLC issued a policy statement more explicitly defining how faculty qualifications should be determined through its Assumed Practices (B.2.a.; January 2014), and subsequently, elaborated on the expectations through its guidelines for Determining Qualified Faculty (March 2016).

Effective Date of Policy (Note: Enter a date here only if the effective date is not next July 1):

Background: The following CMU policy articulates general qualifications criteria while the attached Interpretive Guidance establishes CMU’s hiring criteria across faculty appointment types. In addition to formal academic preparation in the teaching field (i.e., terminal degree or 18 graduate credit hours), the CMU policy and its Interpretive Guidance establish alternative thresholds for qualification consideration based on HLC expectations for "tested experience.

Tested Experience “...may substitute for an earned credential or portions thereof...[and]...includes 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” (HLC Guidelines, p. 4). The HLC guidelines further state: “Tested experience qualifications should be established for specific disciplines and programs and could include skill sets, types of certifications or additional credentials, and experiences” (HLC Guidelines, p. 4).

This policy and the attached Interpretive Guidance were developed under the leadership of the Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA) in consultation with the Academic Department Heads. To begin, the 2012 CMU approved terminal degrees were reviewed and revised in the context of the current HLC expectations on faculty credentialing. Guidance for evaluating tested experience were then added. As the policy evolved, the VPAA consulted representatives of CMU's Faculty Senate for input. During Academic Year 2016-17, faculty members unable to meet one of the three qualifications criteria outlined in the policy were given the option to (a) develop

a plan in order to meet the minimum HLC faculty qualification requirements within two years that must be approved by the VPAA; or (b) not continue teaching for the University.

Recommendation: Approval of Proposed CMU Faculty Qualifications Policy and Adoption of the Interpretive Guidance Faculty Qualification Matrix as a “living” document used to guide CMU faculty hires (both documents were approved by the CMU Faculty Senate during its 4/6/2017 meeting).

Full Policy Statement: Hiring Qualifications for CMU full- and part-time faculty appointments are determined by meeting one of three criteria, all of which must be in the teaching discipline or a closely related field. These are:

1. Terminal degree (as defined specific to the discipline and degree-level being taught), or
2. 18 graduate semester hours, or
3. Equivalent Tested Experience – defined as discipline-specific, professional experience consistent with the Interpretive Guidance in addition to evidence of:
 - a. Advanced academic or professional credentials (e.g., licensure/certifications, graduate credits earned, industry training; apprenticeships recognized by the U.S. Department of Labor; continuing education, etc.);
 - b. Excellence in teaching (teaching experience in the discipline [years and levels] based on reviews by appropriately-credentialed faculty members in the teaching field; teaching awards; supervisor, peer and student evaluations, etc.);
 - c. Professional/scholarly activity and accomplishment (e.g., membership in professional organizations; participation and/or presentation at professional meetings; publication of creative/scholarly activity/publications; professional registry; honors and awards; letters of support from past or current employers on business stationery that speak directly to work in the teaching discipline; other program-related documentation that demonstrates external recognition of the applicant’s expertise; and
 - d. Relevant professional service engagement (e.g., contributions to department, university, community committees/organization, membership/participation in extra- or co-curricular activities/groups/organizations/boards, etc.).

The evidence criteria identified (i.e., items a-d) are consistent with Colorado Mesa University General Evaluation Criteria (See CMU Professional Employee Handbook, pp. VI-3 to VI-5), and provide discipline-relevant benchmark examples of faculty qualifications that build on Tested Experience.

Faculty teaching graduate-level coursework are expected to hold the terminal degree for the teaching field in addition to evidence of current discipline-relevant scholarly activity and productivity.

For community college faculty, a bachelor’s degree in the teaching field is considered to be the minimum academic degree. Tested experience, defined in the context of career and technical education is also allowable.

These criteria apply to faculty appointments across all CMU campuses, as well as those delivering courses for dual credit (concurrent enrollment) in high schools and/or via distance delivery technologies.

Hiring Review Process: CMU, like many institutions, has engaged a comprehensive review of faculty credentials. This review included: (a) completion of a Faculty Member Qualifications Form (See Appendix C), (b) creation and collection of information specific to a CMU faculty vitae template (See Appendix D), and (c) a review of faculty transcripts. This process is engaged as follows and is consistently applied to full-, part-time and concurrent faculty on both the CMU campus and WCCC campus:

1. Academic Department Head (ADH) reviews candidate vitae and transcripts;
2. ADH evaluates appropriateness of the terminal degree and/or 18 graduate credits;
3. In cases where academic preparation (i.e., #2) is not evident, tested experience per the Interpretive Guidance are considered and justified (or not) using the Faculty Qualifications form;
4. ADH makes a recommendation to the VPAA re: qualifications met (or not);
5. VPAA recommendation is recorded on the CMU faculty qualification form (files maintained by the VPAA);
6. If and when applicable, a plan to meet minimum qualifications, is developed (with guidance and approval of the ADH), approved by the VPAA (files maintained by the VPAA). Plan adherence and completion are monitored by the ADH, with annual updates submitted by the ADH to the VPAA as part of the annual evaluation process.

Approved by (signatures as applicable):

Faculty Senate Committee _____ representative/date _____

Faculty Senate _____ Approved _____ representative/date 4/6/17 _____

Vice President for Academic Affairs __Dr. Cynthia Pemberton_____/date 4/6/17 _____

President __Mr. Tim Foster_____/date 4/6/17 _____

Board of Trustees (if applicable)____Approved _____/date 4/28/17 _____

Expiration Date (if applicable): [Click here to enter text.](#)