



Policy on Minimum Qualifications of Instructional Staff

Office of Academic Affairs

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Policy Purpose: This policy establishes minimum qualifications for instructional staff at New Mexico Tech.

Office of Academic Affairs

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POLICY STATEMENTS AND DEFINITIONS

Policy Statement:

The quality of academic programs at New Mexico Tech (NMT) depends upon having highly qualified instructional staff. This policy describes the minimum qualifications required for individuals who teach credit-bearing courses with appointments as faculty, including full-time, part-time, or those who volunteer, defined here collectively as “instructional staff”. While this policy applies to individuals teaching credit-bearing dual credit courses and courses in the community education program, it does not apply to instructors who are students enrolled in a graduate program and supervised by qualified instructional staff.

As adopted by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) on November 2, 2023, institutions establish and maintain reasonable policies and procedures to determine that instructional staff are qualified. Factors that an institution may consider as part of these policies and procedures could include, but are not limited to: the achievement of academic credentials, progress toward academic credentials, equivalent experience, or some combination thereof.

Definitions:

Discipline and **field** are terms interpreted as “appropriate to the program as determined by the department and/or program.” For instance, a degree in Chemical Engineering may be appropriate for teaching courses in Materials Engineering.

Using Credentials:

At NMT, instructional staff should hold an advanced degree in the discipline in which they are teaching.

- For undergraduate programs, an instructional staff member should hold a master’s degree or higher. If the advanced degree is in a discipline unrelated to the area they are teaching in, that instructional staff member must have completed a minimum of 18 graduate credit hours in the discipline in which they are teaching.
- For graduate programs, the instructional staff member should hold the terminal degree determined by the discipline and have a record of research, scholarship, or achievement appropriate for the graduate program (at the respective level for master’s or doctoral programs).

Using Equivalent Experience:

Alternatively, individuals may be considered as instructional staff based on other qualifications and experiences, as recommended by a Department and programs, and approved by the Vice President of Academic Affairs. Examples of other qualifications and experiences include, but are not limited to, research/scholarly work in the discipline or field, related work or professional experience/licensure, certifications, honors, awards, other demonstrated competencies and achievements.

NMT’s policy is to allow academic departments and programs to initially determine when such experience is sufficient to ensure quality instruction. To use this pathway, academic departments

and programs must establish a formal procedure for determining the minimum threshold of experience necessary to allow qualification. Information to consider includes professional work directly related to course content, a record of publications in the relevant discipline, and other evidence of equivalent experience.


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