

Undergraduate Faculty Qualifications and Tested Experience

The University of Southern Indiana (USI) recognizes and adheres to the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) guidelines for determining qualified faculty through *HLC's Criteria for Accreditation and Assumed Practices* (B.2). USI employs competent faculty who are qualified to accomplish the mission and goals of the University. When determining acceptable qualifications of its faculty, including dual credit instructors, the University gives primary consideration to the highest earned degree in the discipline. This policy recognizes that in some instances, there may be a generally accepted standard with regard to some disciplines that allows for a faculty member's qualifications to be other than the required graduate hours in a sub-field¹. HLC's Assumed Practice B.2 allows an institution to determine that a faculty member is qualified based on tested experience outside of the classroom in real-world situations relevant to the discipline in which the faculty member would be teaching. As a result, the University may consider, as appropriate: competence; effectiveness; related work experience; certification(s); licensure; demonstrated competencies; and honors, awards and achievements that contribute to effective teaching and learning outcomes. The following are general guidelines for using *Tested Experience* to determine faculty qualifications:

1. Faculty holding a national or state-issued license or certification in the field, and/or 5+ years of relevant work in the field, may teach introductory level courses².
2. Faculty holding a national or state-issued license or certification in the field, with 10+ years of relevant work in the field, may teach any undergraduate level class².
3. Faculty who teach skill/activity based classes must have 5+ years of performance experience or demonstrated mastery in the skill/activity based teaching area.
4. Faculty who were hired prior to January 1, 2016 and do not have a master's degree in the field nor 18 completed graduate hours in the teaching discipline must have a documented plan for completion that is approved and signed by the relevant chair and dean.
5. 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.
6. Faculty who do not meet guidelines 1-5 above must show/demonstrate discipline-based expertise through scholarly activities, including but not limited to: publications, presentations, professional engagement, consulting, honors, awards, continuing education, etc.

For faculty who are deemed qualified to teach for USI by way of tested experience, documentation must be completed to provide a rationale and proper approvals.

⁽¹⁾ *In business, although Masters in Accounting, Finance, Management and Marketing degrees exist, for those faculty members with business practice, the MBA is a generally accepted qualification for someone teaching in these and other business fields at the undergraduate level.*

⁽²⁾ *A teaching license, even with extensive classroom experience, does not fulfill the guidelines for faculty qualifications and tested experience.*