



Bemidji State University Policy

Policy Name: Minimum Faculty Qualifications for Course Instruction	Effective Date: 05/14/2025
Policy Owner(s): Provost / Vice President for Academic Affairs	Last Review: 04/25/2025
	Next Review: 2028

Policy Statement: This policy establishes the minimum faculty qualifications needed to teach courses at Bemidji State University and is consistent with qualifications for adjunct appointments as specified in Article 21, Section E, Subd. 3 of the IFO contract and with HLC Assumed Practice B.2. This policy does not address qualifications for the initial hire and assignment to rank of full-time faculty. Those are specified in Article 21, Section D of the IFO Contract.

Scope and Purpose of Policy: The Higher Learning Commission requires member institutions to have policies and procedures in place to ensure all instructors are qualified. The intent of this policy is to provide this assurance while allowing the University the flexibility to meet the requirements based on mission and related factors. HLC Assumed Practice B.2. specifies an institution may deem instructors qualified primarily by credentials, but other factors, including but not limited to progress towards academic credentials, equivalent experience, or some combination of these factors may be considered by the institution in determining whether a faculty member is qualified.

The policy applies to all course assignments, regardless of the mode or location of delivery. The purpose is to outline and identify the required credentials for an instructor needed to teach a given course. Credentials must be awarded by accredited institutions.

Procedure:

- Undergraduate courses: Instructors must hold a master’s degree or higher in the discipline of any course they have been assigned to develop or teach. If the instructor holds a master’s degree or higher in a discipline other than that of the assigned course, the instructor must have a minimum of 18 graduate hours in the discipline of the assigned course.
- Graduate courses: Instructors must meet the eligibility requirements outlined in BSU’s [Graduate Faculty criteria](#).



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An instructor whose credentials do not meet the minimum qualifications may be approved to teach courses based on evidence of a combination of substantial teaching experience, advanced coursework appropriate to the discipline, progress toward academic credentials, and/or other relevant experience and expertise. Instructors teaching 300- and 400-level undergraduate or graduate courses are ordinarily expected to have more related experience than required at the 100- and 200-level.

Departments will identify appropriate related experience for their area. Relevant examples include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. relevant work experience
2. current relevant professional licensure or certification
3. relevant professional organization membership
4. relevant continuing education or training
5. relevant honors and awards
6. excellence in relevant teaching
7. authoring or co-authoring one or more relevant journal articles or book chapters
8. recognition in relevant journals, online sources, or textbooks
9. expertise recognized by other relevant credentialed professionals

Support References:

The Higher Learning Commission Policy on Faculty Qualifications:

https://download.hlcommission.org/policy/updates/AdoptedPolicy-FacultyQualifications_2023-11_POL.pdf

Bemidji State University Graduate Faculty Criteria:

https://www.bemidjistate.edu/academics/graduate-studies/wp-content/uploads/sites/23/2023/12/Graduate-Faculty-Criteria-2023-10-18_AH.pdf