Board of Trustees of the Nebraska State Colleges

Meeting Date**: November 12, 2026**

Agenda Item: **2.2**

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AND ACTION:

Committee: **Academic & Personnel Committee**

Action Item: **Revisions to Policy 4600 – Faculty Instructor Qualifications**

Board Policy 4600 establishes policies and procedures for determining faculty qualifications for instruction to meet institutional accreditation requirements and maintain academic integrity.

To remain consistent with the rest of the state and maintain compliance with HLC accreditation rules, we propose the following change to the achievement of academic credentials.

If an undergraduate instructor holds a master's degree in a discipline or subfield outside of the area they want to teach, they must have 18 credit hours of graduate coursework completed in the discipline to be deemed qualified.

If a graduate instructor holds a terminal degree in a discipline or subfield outside of the area they want to teach, they must have 18 credit hours of graduate coursework completed in the discipline to be deemed qualified.

The System Office recommends approval of the revisions to Policy 4600

ATTACHMENTS:

- Revised Policy 4600 - Faculty Instructor Qualifications

Board of Trustees of the Nebraska State Colleges

Academics

POLICY NAME: Faculty Instructor Qualifications

POLICY NUMBER: 4600

A. PURPOSE

To establish policies and procedures for determining faculty qualifications for instruction to meet institutional accreditation requirements and maintain academic integrity.

B. DEFINITIONS

1. **Achievement of Academic Credentials**: Instructor possesses an academic degree relevant to what they are teaching and at least one level above the level of coursework they teach, except in terminal degrees. In terminal degrees, the instructor possesses the same level of degree of coursework they teach.
2. **Equivalent Experience:** Instructor documents experience that is commensurate with achievement of academic credentials such that it qualifies the instructor for instruction.
3. **Instructor:** The faculty of record for a course offered by the College, regardless of rank or part-time/full-time status.
4. **Progress toward Academic Credentials:** Instructor demonstrates current and consistent progress toward the academic credential(s) deemed relevant by the institution for an instructor to be qualified.
5. **Qualified Faculty:** The individual can understand and convey the essentials of a specific discipline in a college environment; engage professionally with colleagues regarding the learning objectives for program graduates; and possess the knowledge, skills, and dispositions appropriate to the credential awarded.
6. **Graduate Assistant:** An instructor who is enrolled in a graduate program offered by one of the State Colleges and whose instruction is supervised by a faculty of record at the College.

C. POLICY

1. **Determination of Faculty Qualifications**

All faculty, including adjunct faculty and those who teach dual credit courses, will be consistently evaluated to determine the courses and program level(s) for which they are eligible to serve as an instructor for the College. The Academic Vice President shall establish a process by which evaluation is completed. Graduate assistant qualifications are exempt from this policy.

2. Procedures for Determining Faculty Qualifications

Each faculty instructor's qualifications shall be determined by establishing documentation for one or more of the following factors:

2.1. Achievement of Academic Credentials

- An instructor who teaches undergraduate or dual credit courses holds at least a master's degree in the discipline or subfield in which they teach.
    - If the instructor holds at least a master's degree in a discipline or subfield other than that in which they are teaching, they have completed at least ~~fifteen (15)~~ eighteen (18) credit hours of graduate coursework in the discipline or subfield in which they are assigned to teach.
- An instructor who teaches graduate courses holds a terminal degree in the discipline or subfield in which they teach.
    - If the instructor holds a terminal degree in a discipline or subfield other than that in which they are teaching, they have completed at least ~~fifteen (15)~~ eighteen (18) credit hours of graduate coursework in the discipline or subfield in which they are assigned to teach.

2.2. Progress toward Academic Credentials

- For undergraduate courses, the instructor holds a master's degree and has completed at least six (6) credits of graduate coursework in the discipline or subfield in which they teach.
- For graduate courses, the instructor holds a terminal degree and has completed at least six (6) credits of graduate coursework in the discipline or subfield in which they teach.
- The instructor who meets one of the criteria above establishes a progress plan with the institution that ensures at least three (3) credits of graduate coursework in the discipline or subfield is completed each year until achievement of academic credentials is met.
- The College supports the instructor with access to academic resources, professional development opportunities, and other qualified faculty members who achieved the required academic credentials.

2.3. Equivalent Experience

- An instructor can be qualified to teach specific courses through evaluation of the following evidence:
    - Minimum threshold of experience;
    - Research and/or scholarship;
    - Recognized achievement; or
    - Other activities or factors specific to the discipline.
- Previous years of classroom instruction does not alone constitute equivalent experience.

3. **Documentation of Faculty Qualifications**
    - Each College shall evaluate and determine a faculty member's qualifications prior to assigning courses for instruction.
    - Official transcripts of all instructors shall be required to be included in their documentation.
    - Each College shall collect and store this documentation in a central location on campus, such as the academic vice president's office.
    - If documentation is stored electronically, a central location will be identified on the College's network.

FORMS / APPENDICES:

None

SOURCE:

Policy Adopted: March 2025

Policy Revised: June 2026, November 2026