



Faculty Credentialing and Course Assignment Policy

Loyola University Chicago requires all departments, academic units, and institutes to implement processes and procedures to verify that their faculty are appropriately credentialed to teach the courses they are assigned. This requirement aligns with the Higher Learning Commission’s Institutional Policies and Procedures for Determining Faculty Qualifications: HLC’s Criteria for Accreditation and Assumed Practices: Guidelines for Institutions and Peer Reviewers (2023) https://download.hlcommission.org/FacultyGuidelines_OPB.pdf and apply to all instructors, including “full-time, part-time, adjunct, dual credit, temporary, non-tenure-track, graduate assistants, and other instructors.” This document provides guidance for institutions on HLC’s requirements for faculty qualifications as specified in [Criterion 3](#) (Core Component 3C) and [Assumed Practice B.2](#). Under this requirement, Loyola University Chicago’s Faculty Credentialing and Course Assignment Policy stipulates that faculty are qualified to teach courses through **achievement of academic credentials** meaning that “an instructor possesses an academic degree relevant to what they are teaching and at least one level above the level at which they teach, except in programs for terminal degrees. In terminal degree programs, an instructor possesses the same level of degree,” by virtue of **progress toward academic credentials** which at Loyola University Chicago refers to compliance with graduate student policies as stipulated below in 3., or by virtue of **equivalent experience** which means “experience that is commensurate with achievement of academic credentials such that it qualifies an instructor for the instruction”.

The policy below applies to undergraduate and graduate/professional teaching responsibilities in all academic units. Credentials outlined in this policy represent minimum requirements, as colleges, schools, and institutes may, if they choose, institute more stringent requirements. Determinations of **equivalent experience** and the relevant content fields to which it applies are made at the program level and documented in academic units and in Faculty Affairs.

Per HLC, **equivalent experience** includes relevant experience in other employment sectors or through professional development or other relevant experience that informs their teaching, including topics relevant to the courses they may teach. As stated in the guidelines document “This could include through a minimum threshold of experience; research and/or scholarship; recognized achievement; and/or other activities and factors.”

A. Credentialing at the Undergraduate Level

A faculty member/instructor is qualified to teach at the undergraduate level by meeting one of the following requirements:

1. The individual must have an earned doctorate/terminal degree in the instructional discipline, or a closely related field as described and documented by the home department and shared with the Office of Faculty Affairs.

OR

2. Have a master's degree in the instructional discipline or a closely related field as described by the home department and documented by the home department and shared with the Office of Faculty Affairs.

OR

3. Be a graduate student enrolled in an LUC doctoral program to the discipline or subfield and meet the requirements described in the [Policy on Graduate Students with Merit Awards in the Graduate School Serving as Primary Instructors](#), or the [Policy on Graduate Students with Merit Awards in the School of Education Serving as Primary Instructors](#).

OR

4. Have equivalent experience that is commensurate with the academic preparation specified above, as described and documented by the home department and shared with the Office of Faculty Affairs.

B. Credentialing at the Graduate/Professional Level

The following qualifications for the credentials to perform various duties at the graduate/professional level represent minimal requirements. All faculty qualified at the graduate level are automatically qualified at the undergraduate level for the respective discipline/subfield.

5. The individual must have a doctorate/terminal degree in the discipline for which they will serve as instructor of record for courses. Doctorate/terminal degrees in closely related fields will be accepted, but the home departments must determine the degrees that are considered relevant to the course content by disciplinary standards and are documented by the home department and shared with the Office of Faculty Affairs.

OR

6. The individual must have a Master's degree (or equivalent) in the discipline for which they will serve as instructor of record for courses AND have equivalent experience that would represent the equivalent of a doctoral level degree. Departments must determine document the criteria for "equivalent experience" and share with the Office of Faculty Affairs.

In addition, the individual must have a history of research, scholarship (e.g., publishing a book, peer-reviewed article, or disciplinary equivalent) or appropriate achievement as defined by the area.

C. Special Appointment

There may be times when a uniquely qualified person, such as an individual from another university, government, industry, or the arts and may be designated "Affiliate Faculty" or "Visiting Faculty" for a specific duty and for a fixed time period within undergraduate or graduate education.