



POLICY ON DETERMINING QUALIFIED FACULTY

University of Detroit Mercy is known for our Catholic identity and the tradition of our religious sponsors, the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) and the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas. Our educational philosophy is grounded in the characteristics of a Jesuit and Mercy education. The University employs qualified faculty who are committed to carrying out the mission "to integrate the intellectual, spiritual, ethical and social development of students." To ensure consistency and transparency in employing qualified faculty, Detroit Mercy uses the Higher Learning Commission's guidelines for determining qualified faculty.

[Excerpt of Higher Learning Commission Guidelines for Determining Faculty Qualifications¹](#)

Assumed Practice B. Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources and Support [Effective November 2023.]

B.2. Faculty Roles and Qualifications

The institution establishes and maintains reasonable policies and procedures to determine that faculty are qualified. The factors that an institution considers 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. The institution's obligations in this regard extend to all instructors and all other entities to which it assigns the responsibility of instruction. HLC will maintain "Institutional Policies and Procedures for Determining Faculty Qualifications Guidelines" to further explain requirements for reasonable policies and procedures in accordance with this Assumed Practice.

Pursuant to this Assumed Practice, faculty should participate substantially in the establishment of institutional policies and procedures for faculty qualifications.

In order to assist institutions and peer reviewers with understanding and complying with the requirements detailed in the Assumed Practices on this topic, HLC shares the following common understandings:

Reasonable policies and procedures to determine that faculty are qualified—Reasonable policies and procedures to determine that faculty are qualified means the policies and procedures to determine that instructors are qualified that are developed and implemented by the institution. These policies and procedures are aligned with the common understandings set forth in these Guidelines. These policies and procedures must be codified, transparent, consistently implemented, and regularly reviewed.

As noted in the Assumed Practice, the reasonable policies and procedures that an institution establishes and maintains to determine that faculty are qualified may include the factors listed in the Assumed Practice (achievement of academic credentials, progress towards credentials, equivalent experience) or other factors established by the institution. Additionally, the reasonable policies and procedures that an institution establishes and maintains to determine that faculty are qualified may consider those or other factors.

¹ Please see [HLC Guidelines: Institutional Policies and Procedures for Determining Faculty Qualifications](#)



Factors Considered in Determining Detroit Mercy Qualified Faculty

Detroit Mercy considers the achievement of academic credentials, progress toward academic credentials, equivalent experience, or some combination thereof when determining faculty qualifications for all instructors and for all other entities to which we assign the responsibility of instruction. The definitions provided here are those of the Higher Learning Commission. Text provided in the grey boxes are details specific to Detroit Mercy. (In places where this policy conflicts with the UDMPU/UDM Collective Bargaining Agreement, the Agreement takes precedence for UDMPU faculty. Therefore, in situations regarding UDMPU faculty, the Collective Bargaining Agreement must always be consulted in connection with this policy.)

Achievement of academic credentials— Achievement of academic credentials means 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.

In the context of general education courses, or other non-occupational courses, achievement of academic credentials typically means that an instructor holds a master’s degree or higher. Generally, this degree is in the discipline or subfield in which the instructor is teaching. If an instructor holds the degree in a discipline or subfield other than that in which they are teaching, the individual has completed a reasonable amount of coursework in the discipline or subfield in which they teach, as defined by the institution.

Detroit Mercy defines a “reasonable amount of coursework” to be at least fifteen (15) graduate credits in the discipline or subfield in which they teach.

Progress toward academic credentials—Progress toward academic credentials means demonstrable, current, and consistent progress toward the academic credential(s) deemed relevant by the institution for an instructor to be qualified. It is expected that an instructor who is qualified as a result of progress toward academic credentials will not permanently be qualified on that basis; rather, the instructor will eventually be qualified on another basis. An instructor who is qualified based on progress toward academic credentials has access to and engages with resources that the institution provides to support their teaching. This could include, for example, professional development opportunities or opportunities to collaborate with other qualified faculty members who are not qualified based solely on progress toward academic credentials.

Detroit Mercy defines “demonstrable, current, and consistent progress toward an academic credential” to be at least 50% of the graduate credits required for the academic credential have been completed at the time of hire, 75% of the graduate credits required for the academic credential have been completed at the start of a second year of instruction and the remaining graduate credits required for the academic credential have been completed at the start of a third year of instruction.



Equivalent experience—Equivalent experience means experience that is commensurate with achievement of academic credentials such that it qualifies an instructor for the instruction. This could include through a minimum threshold of experience; research and/or scholarship; recognized achievement; and/or other activities and factors. *Previous years of classroom instruction does not alone constitute equivalent experience.* Equivalent experience may differ by discipline or program.

Detroit Mercy defines “equivalent experience” as the minimum threshold of extensive practical experience commensurate with achievement of academic credentials in the field related to the content of the course(s) to be taught and/or scholarly activity that will be supervised.

Details of equivalent experience qualifications specific to disciplines and programs are left to each college, school, or student support office (e.g. skill sets, certifications, additional credentials, and experiences) and are available upon request.

- a) School of Architecture & Community Development
- b) College of Business Administration
- c) School of Dentistry
- d) College of Engineering & Science
- e) College of Health Professions & McAuley School of Nursing
- f) College of Humanities, Arts, & Social Sciences
- g) School of Law
- h) School of Optometry
- i) Student Support Offices (Student Success Center, Center for Career & Professional Development, and the International Services Office)

Other Entities—Other entities means entities other than the institution to which the institution assigns the responsibility of instruction. This could include, for example, contractual partners, consortial partners, dual enrollment partners, or institutional subsidiaries and other related entities.

Detroit Mercy’s System of Evaluation for Qualified Faculty

To ensure consistency and transparency in hiring and continued employment, faculty qualifications are documented at the time of hire and whenever a faculty member plans to teach a course outside of their terminal degree discipline using the [Detroit Mercy Qualified Faculty Assurance Form](#).

The electronic form is completed by the Dean or a representative of the Dean’s Office. An electronic copy of each Detroit Mercy Qualified Faculty Assurance Form is sent to the affiliated Dean and the Provost. All database records will be maintained by the Office of Academic Affairs.

Previous Policy approved 8/14/2020.

Reviewed and revised in 2024/25 in adherence to new HLC policy by Academic Affairs, HLC Accreditation Liaison Officer, Academic Leadership Team (ALT), McNichols Faculty Assembly, and the UDMPU Leadership. All revisions approved by ALT on 1/9/2025.