



College of Public Affairs and Education

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS SPRINGFIELD

Subject: Assessing Tested Experience for Instructional Faculty Policy

Category: Faculty - Personnel

Effective Date: 10/17/2024

Contact: CPAE Dean

Purpose: The policy outlined below pertains to decisions regarding the hiring of instructional faculty under the tested experience provision in the College of Public Affairs and Education (CPAE) at UIS. Such decisions will be relatively rare and made with the primary objective of providing students with the best possible learning experience. This policy serves as an exception to the typical standard for hiring instructional faculty based on minimum qualifications by credentials.

Policy

Minimum Qualifications by Credentials:

The standard minimum qualifications for instructional faculty require the completion of a program of study in the discipline or subfield of instruction. This program should include coursework at least one level above that of the course being taught or developed, except in programs for terminal degrees or when equivalent experience is established (Official HLC Guidelines, Higher Learning Commission, 2020).

Tested Experience Provision:

The tested experience provision allows for the evaluation of instructional faculty candidates who possess specialized training/coursework and/or breadth and depth of real-world experiences outside the classroom relevant to the discipline in which they would be teaching. These experiences may include skill sets, certifications, additional credentials, practical (e.g., art, law), clinical, or research experience in industry or the public and nonprofit sectors. Prior teaching experience alone is normally not considered sufficient for establishing tested experience, although other experiential factors as noted above may be considered on a case-by-case basis. Instructional faculty using tested experience must hold a Bachelor's degree.

General Program Procedures:

1. Each unit will identify in a statement to the Dean whether they intend to use tested experience for existing teaching staff or future hires.
2. When a unit wishes to use tested experience for current or future instructional faculty:
 - a) The unit will follow normal governance processes within the unit to develop written minimum standards for tested experience relevant to the discipline and the degree level(s) taught.
 - b) The unit will submit a copy of the written standards for tested experience to the dean.
 - c) The dean will forward the unit's proposal to the College Executive Committee for review to ensure they meet the breadth and depth standard established by the HLC policy.
 - d) The dean will evaluate the unit's proposed standards and the recommendation of the Executive Committee. The dean may either provide final approval of the unit's policy or may consult with the unit and/or the Executive committee and request revisions to ensure the unit policy aligns with this policy and with the HLC standards.
 - e) For each current or future faculty member hired through the tested experience policy, the unit will submit written documentation to the dean using current academic HR processes and systems (e.g. Cornerstone) verifying that the faculty member meets the minimum standards for tested experience established by the unit according to the procedures outlined below.
3. The dean will maintain a copy of each unit's approved tested experience procedure.

Rare and Exceptional Cases:

Decisions made under the tested experience provision will be relatively rare and exceptional, and will be guided by CPAE's commitment to delivering exceptional education to its students. Such decisions will only be made when candidates' tested experience significantly enhances the quality and relevance of instruction beyond what is typically achieved through standard credentials.

Comprehensive Evaluation Procedure

Step 1: Submission and Documentation

- a) Candidates applying for instructional faculty positions under the tested experience exception will submit their applications, which must include evidence of tested experience, such as certifications, additional credentials, practical experiences, clinical experiences, or research experience in industry or the public and nonprofit sectors.

Step 2: Evaluation of Tested Experience

- a) The Unit Executive Officer (UEO) will review each application to ensure that candidates meet the minimum qualification requirements under the unit's approved tested experience policy. The UEO will carefully examine the skills, knowledge, and expertise gained from the candidate's tested experiences, and the duration and significance of those experiences, to determine alignment with the instructional goals of CPAE and the associated program and coursework.

The UEO will ensure that, in addition to holding at least a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution, the breadth and depth of each candidate's specialized training/coursework and/or real-world experiences align with the instructional requirements of the position; enhance the candidate's potential to provide valuable insights and practical knowledge to students; and enrich the overall student learning experience.

- b) The UEO may interview candidates to allow them to elaborate on their specialized training/coursework and/or real-world experiences and how these experiences relate to the teaching role. The UEO may assess the candidate's communication skills and ability to connect their experiences to academic concepts effectively.

Step 3: Memo for Final Evaluation and Justification

- a) The UEO will prepare a memo documenting the evaluation of each candidate's tested experience and qualifications and their alignment with this policy and the unit's tested experience policy.
- b) The memo will provide a comprehensive assessment of the candidate's qualifications as discussed in Step 2(a) above.
- c) The memo will be submitted in the Academic Affairs Position Request for final approval of the hiring decision and will serve as an official record of the evaluation process.