

**Proposition No.:** 23-16/17  
**Title:** A Proposal for New Rule 5.14 Faculty Credentials Required for NMSU Instructors of Record  
**Date Submitted:** January 10, 2017  
**Sponsor(s):** Merranda R. Marin, Maria E. De Boyrie, Gloria A. Villaverde

**Proposed Committee:**

**Assigned Committee:** Faculty Affairs

**Prior Approvals:** Presented for a First Reading by UAC on October 11, 2016. The review period for all Review Groups to provide feedback was extended through November 22, 2016. Revisions incorporating feedback were made to the version presented to the UAC; the version below incorporates those revisions and a compare version with rationale when no change was made, is also provided as Appendix 1.

**Rationale:** This Rule reflects Higher Learning Commission (HLC) minimal criteria for faculty credentials, effective beginning Sept. 1, 2017. Failure to comply with minimal faculty credentials puts the institution out of compliance with HLC Assumed Practice B.2, and jeopardizes NMSU's accreditation by the HLC. Input was received from various constituencies, including faculty and administrators from all NMSU-system campuses; ADAC; ADC; Accreditation Liaison Officers; and Community College Academic Vice Presidents and President.

**Proposal:** *See text immediately following:*

## Proposed New Rule

### **Rule 5.14 Faculty Credentials Required of NMSU Instructors of Record** [v100616](#)

#### **PART 1: PURPOSE**

As authorized by Regents Policy 5.00, this Rule establishes the administrative policies and procedural guidelines relating to the minimal faculty qualifications which are required of NMSU Instructors of Record (IOR).

#### **PART 2: DEFINITIONS**

- A. Academic Subfield: A component of the discipline in which the instruction is delivered. The focus is on the course being taught and the general appropriateness of the IOR's qualifications with reference to such courses. The key consideration is whether a degree in the field or a focus in the specialization appropriately matches the courses the IOR would teach in accordance with the conventions of the academic field.
- B. ABD: All But Dissertation
- C. Instructor of Record (IOR): Includes employees hired into any faculty position, including full and part-time faculty, tenured, tenure-track and non-tenure track faculty, temporary faculty, faculty teaching dual credit and graduate students who may be assigned as an IOR. Teaching assistants enrolled in a graduate program, whose teaching is supervised by faculty, are not considered to be an IOR.

### **PART 3: REQUIREMENTS RELATING TO FACULTY CREDENTIALS**

Each campus or other NMSU component within the NMSU system will ensure that its IORs have the academic preparation, appropriate discipline, expertise and sufficient training and professional experience in the area they teach to be successful in the academic setting. All IOR must meet or exceed the minimal institutional credential requirements set forth in this Rule, as well as the applicable requirements of accrediting bodies and state agencies. NMSU acknowledges that in order to maintain Higher Learning Commission (HLC) accreditation, the institution must be compliant with HLC minimal standards relative to faculty qualifications.

#### **A. Teaching and Learning/Quality, Resources and Support: The institution will provide:**

1. An adequate number of, and appropriately qualified, IOR and staff to provide high-quality educational programs (including dual credit, contractual and consortial programs), instruction and student services.
2. Sufficient number and continuity of IOR to carry out classroom and non-classroom roles, including oversight of curriculum and expectations for student performance, establishment of academic credentials for instructional staff and involvement in assessment of student learning.
3. Sufficient processes and resources for IOR to remain current in their disciplines, adept in their teaching role, and engaged in ongoing professional development.

#### **B. Teaching and Learning/Qualifications and Credentials Required of the IORs:**

1. Primary indications of IOR qualifications are credentials earned. Credentials refer to degrees earned that establish the IOR's credibility as a content expert and thus competence to teach college-level content. Specifically, degrees and certificates from regionally or otherwise accredited institutions or otherwise reputable and established institutions of higher education and other areas of professional education and training provide evidence of appropriate credentialing.
2. Degree completion in a specific field enhances the depth of subject matter knowledge. All IORs should have completed a program of study and possess a degree in the discipline or subfield (as applicable) in which they teach and/or for which they develop curricula, with coursework at least one level above that of the courses being taught or developed. In terminal degree programs, an IOR should possess the same level of degree for which they are providing instruction. In some cases, extensive and appropriate professional or research experience may be used to establish equivalent experience that may be considered in determining qualification to teach particular content.
3. IOR teaching any non-occupational undergraduate courses, including general education and dual credit will hold a master's degree or higher in the discipline or the subfield. If the IOR holds a master's or higher degree in a discipline or subfield other than that in which they are teaching, the IOR must have completed a minimum of 18 graduate credit hours in the respective discipline or subfield. A Master of Education degree or similar broad based degree will be considered appropriate qualification for IOR only when it can be demonstrated that the content of that IOR's degree is sufficiently related to the discipline of the course (*See Subsection B.8.b. below*). High school teaching experience will not be accepted as a substitute for the content knowledge needed for discipline-specific college courses, or for discipline-specific experience.
4. IOR who have not achieved a minimum of 18 graduate credit hours as described above must meet exception criteria, and receive *prior approval* to begin or continue teaching through the process described in Section 8. b. below.
5. IOR teaching in career and technical education college-level certificate and occupational associate's degree programs should hold a bachelor's degree in the field and/or a combination of education, training and tested experience. It is appropriate to consider training and tested experience

for instruction of technical and occupational courses. Such consideration is particularly relevant in fields where the associate's degree is the terminal degree, or where there is no degree beyond a high school diploma. In these cases, appropriate qualifications such as professional certificates and industry appropriate recognition and qualifications will be identified as appropriate qualifications. (*See Subsection 8. a. below*). This may be applicable even in instances where technical/occupational courses may transfer into a bachelor's degree program.

6. IOR teaching in a graduate program should hold the terminal degree determined by the discipline and have a record of research, scholarship or achievement appropriate for the graduate program.
7. IOR guiding doctoral education should have a record of scholarship and preparation to teach at the doctoral level. Research and scholarship should be appropriate to the program and degree offered.
8. IOR meeting minimal levels of qualification based on factors other than standard degree/certificate credentials must meet pre-determined minimal thresholds of equivalent experience/research (*See Subsection a. below*). Any exceptions to pre-determined minimal qualifications will undergo review and approval processes (*See Subsection b. below*).
  - a. Discipline Specific Qualification through Equivalent/Tested Experience: Instructors meeting minimal levels of qualification based on factors other than minimal degree thresholds must meet pre-determined minimal thresholds of equivalent experience/research as defined by the program and approved through the department head/equivalent, dean/equivalent, Vice President for Academic Affairs (community colleges) and Executive Vice President & Provost (EVPP).
  - b. Individual Petitions for Alternative Credentialing: Exceptions to the requirement for pre-determined minimal qualifications may be granted in accordance with the steps below, on a case by case basis. An exception may be granted when expertise and knowledge is established by other factors and only when the granting of an exception does not compromise the quality of the instruction.
    - i. Department head/equivalent must submit a written request and rationale for the exception, based on the candidate's qualifications, to the college dean or community college vice president for academic affairs. The request must not be based on the institutional need for instruction.
    - ii. The dean/equivalent or Vice President for Academic Affairs (community colleges) may deny the request.
    - iii. If the dean/equivalent supports the request, he or she must forward the request, expressing their support for the hire and rationale, to the appropriate body, with the EVPP having final review and approval.
    - iv. For all requests that are forwarded to the Executive Vice President and Provost, the EVPP makes the final decision for or against the hire or reappointment.
    - v. Documentation for decisions that are made to hire through the exceptions process will be forwarded to Human Resource Services- Employment & Compensation Services Office, and are kept on file, similar to official transcripts, certificates and other official credentialing documents. Original documents from community college hires will be maintained in the local HR Office, and verified copies will be maintained in the Las Cruces HR Office.

#### **PART 4: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

- A. Executive Vice President and Provost: The Executive Vice President and Provost is ultimately responsible for the verification and validation of NMSU faculty (IOR) credentialing requirements within the NMSU System. This is accomplished through coordination with, and in reliance upon, the senior academic administrators at each campus (academic deans and community college vice presidents for academic affairs), and with assistance from HRS-Employment & Compensation.

- B. Academic Dean/ Division Dean through Community College Vice President Academic Affairs: The academic dean, or division dean through the community college vice president of academic affairs, are responsible for validation of IOR credentialing documents and for ensuring that qualifications align with course assignments for their college or community college division. Prior to an IOR's appointment with NMSU, the academic dean or community college division dean examines and approves the prospective IOR's credentials to ensure compliance with institutional and accreditation requirements. The academic dean or the division dean, through their respective community college vice president of academic affairs, will forward verified documentation, including official transcripts and translation and evaluation of foreign transcripts as needed, to Human Resource Services – Employment & Compensation Services.
- C. Academic Department Head or Community College Equivalent: Prior to appointment of an IOR, the department head or equivalent at the community colleges examines the prospective IOR's curriculum vitae and official transcript(s) for the qualifying degree, to verify that the IOR meets the position requirements. The qualifying degree is the degree that qualifies the IOR to teach a particular course. If the appointment cannot be made without an exception from credentialing requirements, the department head or equivalent at the community colleges must initiate the exceptions process as outlined in **Part 2, Subsection B. 8. a. or Subsection B. 8. b. above**. The department head or equivalent must forward the documentation required by that process through the dean or community vice president for academic affairs for secondary approval to proceed.
- D. Instructors of Record: As a condition of employment, all IOR are responsible to provide appropriate documentation to verify their credentials. This includes but is not limited to, current resume/curriculum vitae, official transcripts, appropriate licenses or certifications, verification of work related to teaching experience and if required, documentation of equivalent/tested experience to justify alternative credentialing. The cost to obtain official transcripts (including necessary translation and evaluation of transcripts from institutions outside of the United States) and copies of licenses and certifications must be borne by the prospective faculty member.
- E. Instructors of Record: IOR who are teaching in disciplines that require licensure and/or certification are responsible to provide documentation of licensure and certification to the department head or equivalent community college division dean. It is the responsibility of the IOR to acquire and maintain discipline-required licensure(s)/certification(s). The institution may periodically request updated documents from its faculty members to maintain credentialing records.
- F. ABD IOR: ABD IOR must provide an official transcript with their terminal degree posted within one (1) year of appointment.
- G. HRS-Employment I& Compensation Services: The office of Human Resource Services – Employment & Compensation Services is the institution's designated repository for faculty credentials, and is responsible for maintaining official documentation of faculty credentials (including official transcripts and other documentation relevant to the faculty member's teaching qualifications). Prior to new appointments and subsequent with continued appointments, the dean will forward all such documents to HR. The dean will be notified of any discrepancies or incomplete documentation. In such cases the dean must submit the required credentialing documents for all IOR as soon as possible, and no later than the university's official census day.

## **PART 5: PROCEDURAL GUIDELINES**

- A. Official Transcripts are Required: It is the responsibility of each faculty member/IOR to provide official transcripts to NMSU.
  - 1. Transcripts that are classified as unofficial will not be accepted as official.

2. Transcripts from institutions outside of the United States must be evaluated and translated by an external agency prior to submission to NMSU. NMSU criteria for determining the authenticity of transcripts and other credentials includes:
  - a. The issuing institution's official seal;
  - b. Signature of the appropriate authorizing agent, preferably the institution's registrar;
  - c. The institution's official letterhead or stationary;
  - d. The institution's watermark or other identifier;
  - e. The date of issue;
  - f. Translation and evaluation for equivalency for transcripts from institutions outside of the USA is required to be performed by a reputable external agency.
  
- B. Transcripts from Non-Regionally Accredited Institutions: Individuals whose qualifying degree is from a non-regionally accredited institution in the United States (U.S.) will be considered on a case-by-case basis. When hiring such individuals, additional criteria must be considered, include the degree issuing institution's reputation, whether the institution is accredited or recognized by other agencies or organizations, and a thorough evaluation of the candidate's course work and experience. If such a hire is deemed desirable, the department head or equivalent must fully evaluate the faculty member's educational background and experience and document the findings in a memorandum to the dean. If the dean agrees that the individual possesses the appropriate academic preparation and experience, the department head or equivalent will forward supporting documentation with the request to offer.
  
- C. Additional or Updated Information Requests: NMSU may require an IOR to provide reasonably additional or updated documentation; it will be the responsibility of the IOR to respond in a timely manner.
  
- D. Documentation Required Pending Receipt of, or In Lieu of, Official Transcript: On rare occasion for circumstances which inure to the benefit of the students and not convenience to administration nor to the IOR, an IOR may be permitted to commence teaching prior to receipt of an official transcript, *provided* that an unofficial transcript has been provided and has otherwise been authenticated.
  1. In such cases, a copy of the request for an official transcript must be included in the IOR's qualifications documentation.
  2. In the interim, the hiring department head or equivalent will verify the IOR's degree and major field of study by contacting the awarding college/university.
  3. The department head or equivalent will also attempt to confirm receipt of the transcript request, and will document if there is any type of hold on the release of the transcript.
  4. When the official transcript arrives, it will be forwarded to HR and placed in the IOR's file.
  5. The official transcript must be submitted to HRS-Employment & Compensation Services no later than the official census day of the hiring semester.
  6. On very rare occasion, an IOR may assert that it is physically impossible to produce an official or unofficial transcript. In such cases, NMSU will render a determination after considering all relevant facts and all other evidence pertaining to an IOR's credentials and qualifications.
  
- E. Consequences for Non-Compliance with this Rule:
  1. If after the official census day, all required documentation relating to faculty credentials, including but not limited to the official transcript, has not been received by HRS-Employment &

Compensation Services, the IOR will be deemed to have not met credential requirements, and will not be eligible for reappointment.

2. If the documentation is received after census day, depending upon the circumstances for the delay, in the discretion of the Executive Vice President and Provost, the IOR may be reconsidered for eligibility.
3. NMSU reserves the right to remove an IOR from a teaching or other academic assignment immediately if evidence is discovered which substantiates dishonesty materially affecting the IOR's purported academic record.