

Northern Arizona University
Required Qualifications for Instructional Faculty
Effective January 1, 2017

Approved by Faculty Senate, November 7, 2016; Revisions approved September 11, 2017

Northern Arizona University remains committed to ensuring that instruction is provided by qualified faculty members. This document details the policies and procedures associated with that assurance.

All faculty—tenured, tenure track, non-tenure track, and part-time—must have appropriate qualifications related to the level and content of each course taught. Faculty must have either the terminal degree or a degree one level above the target degree for the program in which they teach (e.g., instructors for a baccalaureate program must have at least a master's degree) and/or for which they take the primary responsibility for developing the curricula. Exceptions to this must be approved by the dean in accordance with #2 below.

It is the responsibility of the hiring authority (chair, director or dean) to ensure and document the qualifications of faculty members hired to teach at Northern Arizona University. Documentation of the faculty qualifications must be available for verification, either on file in the hiring unit or entered into the NAU faculty database¹ (FAAR) at the time of hire.

1. Qualification for teaching a specific course² is typically based on the faculty member's credentials as evidenced by a *transcript* from an accredited university showing one of the following (exceptions described in #2 below):
 - a. Terminal degree in a relevant field of study.
 - b. For courses at the baccalaureate level, Master's degree or higher in a relevant field of study OR a Master's degree and at least 18 graduate credits in the content area of the course to be taught (e.g., to qualify to teach Biology courses, an instructor with a Master's of Education degree would need 18 credits of graduate level coursework in Biology.)
2. In cases where the transcript does not warrant a judgment of meeting the qualifications as outlined in #1, faculty can be determined to be qualified through tested experience, in accordance with the principles below:
 - a. Experience must be directly related to the course to be taught (e.g., experience as a business manager would be acceptable for teaching a management course, but not an accounting course; in certain circumstances, regulatory bodies have made provisions for faculty who have baccalaureate degrees, are licensed, and have and at least three years of experience to teach in their clinical area of expertise).
 - b. Experience must be of sufficient duration to justify instructional expertise. This varies according to the complexity of the teaching assignment, but in general, a minimum of three years is required. The hiring authority is responsible for documenting the duration in making the judgment.

¹ Transcripts, credit verification, and tested experience documentation, such as work records, CV, letters of confirmation, can be logged in the FAAR system ("faculty roster" available under the "regional accreditation" tab).

² In the case of cross-listed courses (i.e., two different prefixes), qualification to teach either prefix is acceptable evidence of faculty qualification.

- c. In cases where faculty were hired at NAU prior to 2010, the documented success of teaching a content area for five or more years will constitute demonstration of qualification to teach.
3. For student instructors and lab instructors, one of the following options may be used to document qualifications:
 - a. Master's degree in a relevant content area;
 - b. 18 graduate credits in a relevant content area;
 - c. For introductory lab courses (e.g., Chemistry Fundamental Lab), lab instructors must have a baccalaureate degree and demonstrated proficiency in the relevant discipline, safety protocols, and lab techniques;
 - d. For introductory courses (e.g., freshmen writing, introductory mathematics), status as a current graduate student with supervision by qualified faculty;
 - e. For academic success courses (e.g., NAU100) intended for first-year students, a trained undergraduate student under the close supervision of qualified faculty (note: the faculty member must be the instructor of record);
 - f. Trained Teaching Assistants (undergraduate or graduate) or Peer Facilitators under the close supervision of qualified faculty (note: the faculty member must be the instructor of record); OR
 - g. For recreation courses (e.g., FIT prefixes), expertise and/or relevant certification in the recreation area must be documented.
4. To be qualified to serve as dissertation chair in doctoral programs, an individual must be a full-time³ faculty member at NAU and must have both a terminal degree in the area of study and strong record of achievement in their research, scholarship, or creative activities appropriate to the program and degree offered. At least one of the following options⁴ may be used to document qualifications:
 - a. A proven publication record (peer-reviewed articles, book chapters or books) of research and/or scholarly work or the equivalent significant creative activities within the previous five-year period;
 - b. Secured, significant funding (i.e., at least equal to the annual salary of the faculty member) from competitive, external research grants within the previous five-year period;
 - c. Leadership roles and/or significant, recognized engagement in national discipline-based programs for doctoral education;
 - d. Documented recognition as a contributing research reviewer in a relevant disciplinary association appropriate to the program and degree offered; OR
 - e. Long-term service (i.e., 10 or more years) as a successful doctoral advisor. (Note: this is to address the person who has re-focused a career on mentoring doctoral students as opposed to original and significant research, scholarship, or creative activities.)

³ Per Conditions of Faculty Service, the definition of full-time faculty is "Faculty employed in a 50% or greater capacity for an academic or fiscal year period."

⁴ Alternative evidence can be considered on a case-by-case basis.