

Faculty employed at Augustana College are assumed to be appropriately qualified to prepare and teach college-level coursework and to support the mission and goals of the college. As part of the process of maintaining accreditation through the Higher Learning Commission (HLC), the College is expected to have procedures in place to ensure that faculty are qualified in their respective area of teaching. The following was prepared in light of the HLC guidelines: Determining Qualified Faculty Through HLC's Criteria for Accreditation and Assumed Practices: Guidelines for Institutions and Peer Reviewers and may be found here:

https://download.hlcommission.org/FacultyGuidelines_OPB.pdf

The salient requirements for determining qualified faculty are referenced in that document and are noted here: HLC Policy: Assumed Practices <https://www.hlcommission.org/Policies/assumed-practices.html>

B. Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support

2. Faculty Roles and Qualifications

a. Qualified faculty members are identified primarily by credentials, but other factors, including but not limited to equivalent experience, may be considered by the institution in determining whether a faculty member is qualified. Instructors (excluding for this requirement teaching assistants enrolled in a graduate program and supervised by faculty) possess 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 or when equivalent experience is established. In terminal degree programs, faculty members possess the same level of degree. When faculty members are employed based on equivalent experience, the institution defines a minimum threshold of experience and an evaluation process that is used in the appointment process. Faculty teaching general education courses, or other non-occupational courses, hold a master's degree or higher in the discipline or subfield. If a faculty member holds a master's degree or higher in a discipline or subfield other than that in which he or she is teaching, that faculty member should have completed a minimum of 18 graduate credit hours in the discipline or subfield in which they teach.

b. Instructors teaching in graduate programs should hold the terminal degree determined by the discipline and have a record of research, scholarship or achievement appropriate for the graduate program.

The historical practice at Augustana has been to place a priority on hiring faculty who have earned a terminal degree related to the courses they are hired to teach. Faculty who hold an earned master's degree in their field of responsibility are also considered and hired for non-tenure track and part-time appointments. *It is understood that departments and programs may formulate discipline-specific standards that exceed the minimum qualifications.*

As referenced above, HLC allows for other types of preparation to be articulated and considered during the appointment process. The purpose of this document is to articulate and acknowledge our past practice and to provide the outline with which to consider how other levels of preparation may be appropriate in specific circumstances. In instances where programs or majors involve discipline-specific credentials or external accreditation, those standards may guide minimum credentials and expectations. Other areas of consideration may include: competence; effectiveness; undergraduate and graduate degrees; related work experiences, tested experience, research and scholarship in the field; professional licensure and certifications; honors and awards; continuous documented excellence in teaching; or other demonstrated competencies and achievements that contribute to expertise associated with effective teaching and student learning outcomes.

Faculty members holding a terminal degree are deemed qualified to teach courses in the First Year Inquiry (FYI) and Honors (FYH) sequences due to their academic preparation in essential liberal arts skills such as critical thinking, information literacy, and communication. Faculty members with a master's degree in areas related to the outcomes and content of FYI or FYH courses are also considered minimally qualified to teach these courses.

Based on the highest earned degree, faculty members are deemed minimally qualified to teach the following courses at Augustana based on academic credentials:

- Terminal Degree (or ABD) in the discipline or closely related area - *all undergraduate and graduate courses consistent with the degree as well as general education courses including the first-year sequence.*
- Master's degree in the discipline or closely related area - *all undergraduate courses consistent with the degree as well as general education courses including the first-year sequence.*
- Master's degree other than the discipline or related area of instruction AND a minimum of 18 graduate credits in the discipline or area they will be/are teaching - *general education and non-occupational courses in that discipline and courses in the first-year sequence.*

Faculty members with a bachelor's degree in the discipline or closely related area who have been determined minimally qualified based on equivalent experience may teach discipline-specific and occupational courses at the undergraduate level. For graduate courses, faculty members with a master's degree in the discipline may be determined as minimally qualified based on equivalent experience and teach courses within the discipline.