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**3.7.1. The institution employs competent faculty members qualified to accomplish the mission and goals of the institution. When determining acceptable qualifications of its faculty, an institution gives primary consideration to the highest earned degree in the discipline in accordance with the guidelines listed below. The institution also considers competence, effectiveness, and capacity, including, as appropriate, undergraduate and graduate degrees, related work experiences in the field, professional licensure and certifications, honors and awards, continuous documented excellence in teaching, or other demonstrated competencies and achievements that contribute to effective teaching and student learning outcomes. For all cases, the institution is responsible for justifying and documenting the qualifications of its faculty.**

*Credential Guidelines:*

*a. Faculty teaching general education courses at the undergraduate level: doctoral or master's degree in the teaching discipline or master's degree with a concentration in the teaching discipline (a minimum of 18 graduate semester hours in the teaching discipline).*

*b. Faculty teaching associate degree courses designed for transfer to a baccalaureate degree: doctoral or master's degree in the teaching discipline or master's degree with a concentration in the teaching discipline (a minimum of 18 graduate semester hours in the teaching discipline).*

*c. Faculty teaching associate degree courses not designed for transfer to the baccalaureate degree: bachelor's degree in the teaching discipline, or associate's degree and demonstrated competencies in the teaching discipline.*

*d. Faculty teaching baccalaureate courses: doctoral or master's degree in the teaching discipline or master's degree with a concentration in the teaching discipline (minimum of 18 graduate semester hours in the teaching discipline). At least 25 percent of the discipline course hours in each undergraduate major are taught by faculty members holding the terminal degree—usually the earned doctorate—in the discipline.*

*e. Faculty teaching graduate and post-baccalaureate course work: earned doctorate/terminal degree in the teaching discipline or a related discipline.*

*f. Graduate teaching assistants: master's in the teaching discipline or 18 graduate semester hours in the teaching discipline, direct supervision by a faculty member experienced in the teaching discipline, regular in-service training, and planned and periodic evaluations.*

Rationale and Notes

This standard asserts the fundamental principle that qualified, effective faculty members are essential to carrying out the goals of the mission of the institution and ensuring the quality and integrity of the academic programs of the institution. The emphasis is on overall qualifications rather than simply academic credentials and that, while academic credentials are primary and in most cases will be the standard qualification for faculty members, other types of qualifications may prove to be appropriate. It is also important to note that the documentation and justification of qualifications for each member of the faculty are the responsibility of the institution.

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**Note:** The Commission suggests that institutions use the Commission's "Faculty Roster Form for Full-time and Part-Time Faculty" or a similar format providing the same information to report the qualifications of faculty. The following faculty should be reported: all full-time and part-time faculty teaching credit courses that can be part of a degree, certificate, diploma, or other credential; faculty teaching developmental or remedial courses; and teaching assistants who are the instructors of record.

Relevant Questions for Consideration:

- How does the mission of the institution influence the determination of the qualifications of the faculty in order to meet its goals?
- How does the institution determine the competencies of members of the faculty and justify that the qualifications of the members of the faculty meet these competencies?
- How does the institution document and justify the qualifications for each member of the faculty?

Sample Documentation:

- A complete roster of faculty, qualifications, and teaching assignments (see the Commission's "Faculty Roster Form for Full-time and Part-Time Faculty")
- Policies governing the qualifications of members of the faculty necessary to carry out the mission of the institution and the process for the selection of members of the faculty that ensure these qualifications
- A file or portfolio on each member of the faculty that includes pertinent, up-to-date information describing the qualifications of the faculty member, such as curriculum vitae, teaching evaluations, and institutional qualification justifications in nonstandard situations.

**3.7.2. The institution regularly evaluates the effectiveness of each faculty member in accord with published criteria, regardless of contractual or tenured status.**

Rationale and Notes:

Since the members of the faculty direct the learning enterprise of an academic institution and are responsible for assuring the quality of the academic program, it is imperative that an effective system of faculty evaluation be in place. The concept of faculty evaluation encompasses a range of processes designed to assess the quality and effectiveness of the performance of each member of the faculty. The overall evaluation system may include a variety of components, but regardless of the evaluation types utilized, it is critical that the faculty evaluation system be consistent with the mission of the institution.