

Vincennes University

ACADEMIC CREDENTIALING GUIDELINES

Vincennes University utilizes five faculty credentialing categories in its faculty approval process. These categories, described below, include traditional, tested experience, provisional, emergency, and peer instructor. The Higher Learning Commission (HLC) provides general guidance that faculty possess an academic degree relevant to the discipline in which they teach at least one level above the level at which they teach, except in terminal degree programs or when equivalent experience is established.

Course Definitions:

- **General Education or Non-occupational courses** refer to foundational courses that address basic skills and liberal education objectives and competencies to provide students from diverse majors with a breadth of knowledge beyond the major. See VU catalog for detailed overview of the University Core Curriculum. This classification also includes program courses in academic transfer degrees; these courses require the same level of teaching credentials as general education courses.
- **Professional courses** are core courses within a specialized degree program that typically leads to employment in corporate or government fields, some of which lead to a professional qualification/certification (i.e. CPA or engineer).
- **Career and technical courses** are normally specific to degree programs that lead to expertise and specialization in skilled trades, applied sciences, or modern technology career fields.

Career and Technical vocations almost always carry the connotation of some kind of skilled labor (i.e. welder, electrician, and mechanic). By contrast, "professional" implies a specialized kind of "knowledge worker", with varying levels of career choices.

1. Traditional

This is the standard and preferred approval model implemented in accordance with the HLC Assumed Practices and Guidelines for Determining Qualified Faculty.

Types of Courses	Degree Attainment/Credentials
General Education or Non-Occupational	Master's Degree in the discipline or related area OR a master's degree with 18 graduate hours in the discipline or related area.
Professional	Master's Degree in the discipline or related area OR a master's degree with 18 hours in the discipline or related area.
Career and Technical or Occupational	Bachelor's Degree in the discipline or related area OR an Associate's Degree in the discipline or related area plus a minimum of two years' (or more, as determined by the department) documented related industry experience. Any applicable licensures or certifications.

2. Tested Experience

This approval model is typically reserved for Career and Technical courses, but may apply to academic or professional courses in specific disciplines or circumstances. In lieu of traditional credentials, a candidate may submit a strong body of evidence that would replace the traditional credentials. The body of evidence should carry sufficient strength of information to affirm to a higher education peer that the individual is equivalently qualified to teach the course as those with traditional credentials. The body of evidence, commensurate with the applicable discipline, must include supporting materials for validation and documentation.

Types of Courses	Degree Attainment/Credentials
General Education or Non-Occupational	Bachelor's Degree <u>with</u> a combination of discipline specific coursework and extensive, externally validated expertise and/or ability in the discipline or related area. External validation does <u>not</u> include teaching experience in the discipline. External validation may include, but is not limited to, publications or significant public recognition.
Professional	Associate degree (or higher, as determined by the department) in the discipline or related area, coursework commensurate with departmental requirements and, where applicable, certifications and industry specific experience.
Career and Technical or Occupational	Combination of education, training, applicable licensures/certifications, and relevant occupational experience commensurate with the level of expertise required in the discipline.

The minimum qualifications required utilizing tested experience are determined by the department and may vary by the college, program and/or course. Please refer to the "Academic Credentialing Chart." Each applicant's qualifying expertise and supporting documentation is considered on a case-by-case basis.

3. Provisional (Education Plan required)

A provisional approval may be considered when an instructor is close to meeting the traditional or tested experience credentialing requirements and submits an education plan that outlines the coursework and/or other credentials (i.e. licensure/certification) to be obtained. The education plan, including a timeline for completing the credentials for traditional or tested experience approval in a given discipline, must be developed and submitted with the original faculty approval application. Provisional approval will only be considered for individuals who are willing and able to complete the required credentials within the specified timeframe below and who demonstrate ongoing progress (i.e. submit an updated transcript for review or other documentation) to fulfill his/her commitment under the approved education plan.

The instructor must meet the following criteria for each category:

Types of Courses	Degree Attainment/Credentials
General Education or Non-Occupational	Have a master's degree with a minimum of 6 graduate hours in the discipline or related area OR a minimum of a bachelor's degree and at least twelve graduate hours in the discipline or related area; AND be willing and able to earn the required credentials for traditional approval requirements within three years (or less as determined by the department).
Professional	Have a <u>minimum</u> of an associate's or bachelor's degree (varies by program area) in the discipline or related area; and be willing and able to earn the required credentials for traditional or tested experience approval requirements within three years (or less as determined by the department).
Career and Technical or Occupational	Be willing and able to earn the credentials required (generally a certification or licensure) for traditional or tested experience approval requirements within one year.

Continued provisional approval will be granted contingent upon demonstration of progress toward earning the required credentials. Provisional approval requires development and implementation of an education plan. Once an instructor has met the requirements for traditional or tested experience approval, his/her approval status will be updated to the applicable approval and his/her provisional status removed.

Examples that may be considered under the provisional approval process:

General Education/Non-Occupational:

- An English instructor has a Master's in Education and six graduate hours in English. The instructor submits an education plan with a commitment to earn 12 additional graduate hours in English/Literature within two years.
- A math instructor has a Bachelor's in Math Education and 12 graduate hours in Math. The instructor submits an education plan with a commitment to earn the remaining credentials needed for traditional approval within three years.

Professional:

- A law enforcement instructor has an associate's degree in law enforcement with 5 years of work experience in the field. The instructor submits an education plan with a commitment to earn the required credentials needed for tested experience approval within three years.
- A business instructor has a bachelor's degree in business education with 18 total hours of business related courses, with a minimum of 9 discipline specific hours related to the course being taught. The instructor submits an education plan with a commitment to earn a master's degree within three years.

Career and Technical:

- An automotive instructor has 8 years of industry specific professional experience. The instructor submits an education plan with a commitment to earn the required ASE certification within one year.

4. Emergency

Under extenuating circumstances, Vincennes University may approve an individual who does not currently meet VU's faculty credentialing requirements on an emergency basis only. A late resignation, family emergency, or an unexpected instructor illness are examples of extenuating circumstances that may warrant consideration for an emergency approval. An instructor may be approved on an emergency basis until the end of the semester or academic year in which the course is being taught. An instructor may not be approved or hired under the emergency approval process for more than two semesters (including partial) within the same academic year. Continued approval for the same instructor beyond these timeframes or entering into a new academic year will only be considered if s/he meets the requirements of the traditional, tested experience, or provisional approval models described above.

5. Peer Instructor (for use in conjunction with the HELPHS program only – Education Plan required)

A peer instructor approval will be allowed only in conjunction with the Hybrid Educational Learning Program for High Schools (HELPHS). The HELPHS program, utilized specifically within VU's dual credit programming efforts, allows an approved high school instructor--Peer Instructor--to collaborate with a fully credentialed VU faculty member--Credentialed Instructor--to deliver dual credit curriculum via a hybrid model (distance education and face-to-face instruction) to high school students. See the HELPHS policy document for detailed guidelines and faculty responsibilities. Peer instructor approval MUST be supported with the following: 1) commitment to complete minimum, discipline-specific credentials required for provisional approval within two years and 2) ongoing, documented progress (via updated transcript or other documentation) to demonstrate the Peer instructor is meeting the expectations of an Approved Education Plan.

Upon attaining the minimum, discipline-specific requirements for provisional approval, the Peer instructor will transition to Provisional Approval. See **3. Provisional** of this document.

Application/Credential Review

All required faculty application materials, including a current resume, academic transcripts*, applicable certifications and/or licensures, and all supporting documentation required by the university or program area must be submitted in full in order for the faculty application to be prepared and processed by the appropriate VU department/program representative. Credentials will be reviewed and approved by the applicable Vincennes University program director, department chair, college dean, and Provost. Final approval rests upon, and is at the discretion of, the University Provost.

**Unofficial academic transcripts may be submitted for review in the application process. Upon approval, all requested, official academic transcripts from post-secondary institutions must be issued directly to Vincennes University from the granting institution prior to teaching for VU. Transcripts issued to the student or another entity (even if the document is submitted in a sealed envelope) will not be accepted as official transcripts.*