Background

This policy applies to all University of Cincinnati instructors including represented and unrepresented full-time faculty, part-time faculty (including those who hold an adjunct title as a secondary position), volunteers and Emeriti who are teaching. This policy applies to all campus locations, including online teaching, College Credit Plus locations and the College of Medicine. As per Higher Learning Commission Guidelines, all faculty are referred to as “instructors” in the comprehensive policy below.

The University of Cincinnati adheres to the Higher Learning Commission Guidelines with regard to determining faculty qualifications. The University of Cincinnati considers competence, effectiveness, and capacity including, as appropriate, undergraduate and graduate degrees and coursework, related work and scholarly experience, professional licensure and certifications, honors and awards, documented excellence in teaching, and demonstrated competencies and achievements when determining the appropriateness of instructor qualifications.

Policy

1. Qualified instructors 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.

2. Instructors (excluding for this requirement teaching assistants enrolled in a graduate program and supervised by faculty) must 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 must possess the same level of degree.

3. Instructors teaching general education courses, or other non-occupational courses, must hold a master’s degree or higher in the discipline or subfield.

4. If an instructor holds a master’s degree or higher in a discipline or subfield other than that in which they are teaching, they must have completed a minimum of 18 graduate credit hours in the discipline or subfield in which they teach.

5. Instructors teaching in graduate programs must hold the terminal degree determined by the discipline and have a record of research, scholarship or achievement appropriate for the graduate program.
6. When qualifications are determined on the basis of tested-experience, previous success and experience in teaching in itself is generally NOT adequate evidence of qualification to be the University of Cincinnati instructor of record.

Procedure
Instructor transcripts are verified as part of the appointment or hiring process and in accordance with the University’s Pre-Employment Background Check Policy 16.17.

Tested Experience Process

1. All instructors retained and/or hired on the basis of “tested experience” must complete an application that includes academic transcripts, a CV, and a narrative describing how their experiences prepare them for their role as an instructor. This information must be updated annually through the review process conducted by The Office of Institutional Research.

2. The academic dean and/or his or her designee must include a cover letter, providing rationale for the requested Tested Experience Waiver. This letter must include the course(s) to be taught, and at what level (Bachelor’s, Master’s or Doctorate).

3. Individuals who are making substantial progress toward meeting the instructor credentialing requirements and who are mentored by an instructor who does meet the minimum credentialing requirements may serve as instructors while enrolled in a program to meet credentialing requirements. For example, this may be applicable to an MA student teaching English 1001.

4. A committee appointed by the Senior Vice Provost for Academic Affairs will review “tested experience” qualifications. The committee considers competence, effectiveness, and capacity including, as appropriate, undergraduate and graduate degrees and coursework, related work and scholarly experience, professional licensure and certifications, honors and awards, documented excellence in teaching, and demonstrated competencies and achievements when determining the appropriateness of instructor qualifications. Outside experts may be consulted on an "as needed" basis if the appropriate evaluative expertise is not available on campus.

5. A letter indicating the outcome of the Tested Experience assessment will be shared with the applicant and a copy of the letter will be placed in his/her personnel file.