



Faculty Qualifications Requirements for Community Colleges, including Dual Credit Instructors.

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The Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) has a long-standing policy requiring community college faculty to meet certain minimum qualifications. This includes full-time, part-time and dual credit faculty. Considering concerns that have been raised about faculty qualifications, particularly as it relates to the Higher Learning Commission's (HLC) tested experience policy, this document attempts to provide some clarity on this issue. It is divided into two parts, "regular" non-dual credit faculty and dual credit faculty.

If you have any questions please feel to contact:

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Non-Dual Credit Faculty

As it relates to on-campus faculty the authority to require certain qualifications is based upon the following administrative rule:

- **Section 1501.303 Program Requirements, f) Preparation of Professional Staff.** Professional staff shall be educated and prepared in accordance with generally accepted standards and practices for teaching, supervising, counseling and administering the curriculum or supporting system to which they are assigned. Such preparation may include collegiate study and professional experience. Graduate work through the master's degree in the assigned field or area of responsibility is expected, except in those areas in which the work experience and related training is the principal learning medium. (see the [ICCB System Rules](#), page 21).¹

To operationalize this rule, the following applies with an aim toward maintaining quality, being consistent with HLC standards,² insofar as that is possible, and maximizing flexibility for colleges.

- 1) For transfer (generally those courses that fall in PCS 1.1) courses, ICCB staff review transcripts to ensure that faculty have either a) a Master's Degree in the discipline in which a

¹ https://www.iccb.org/iccb/wp-content/pdfs/manuals/ICCB_SystemRules_Manual.pdf

² Faculty teaching in 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.

faculty member is teaching or b) a Master's Degree in any discipline ***and*** 18 graduate hours in the discipline within which an individual is teaching.

- 2) For career and technical education (generally those courses that fall in PCS 1.2), the ICCB expects the appropriate credential in the field (e.g. for welding, [AWS certifications](#)) and 2000 hours of work (not teaching) experience in the field being taught. Further, the college is expected to have a way by which this experience is documented.³
- 3) Though there is no clear cut policy in ICCB rules for faculty teaching only remedial education courses (PCS 1.4), the ICCB generally follows the HLC standard requiring one degree higher than those that an instructor is teaching. Thus, for remedial faculty, a Bachelor's degree would meet our standards.

Dual Credit Faculty

As it relates to dual credit faculty qualifications, the authority to require certain faculty qualifications is based upon the following administrative rule:

- **Section 1501.507 Credit Hour Claims, b), 11), B) Instructors.** The instructors for these courses shall be selected, employed and evaluated by the community college. They shall be selected from individuals with appropriate credentials and demonstrated teaching competencies at the college level. For transfer courses (1.1 PCS), these qualifications include a minimum of a Master's Degree with 18 graduate hours appropriate to the academic field of study or in the discipline in which they will be teaching. For CTE (1.2 PCS) courses, these qualifications include 2,000 hours of work experience and appropriate recognizable credentials, depending on the specific field.
- It should also be noted that [The Dual Credit Quality Act](#) (P.A. 96-194, eff. 1-1-10.) requires that "Instructors teaching credit-bearing college-level courses for dual credit must meet the same academic credential requirements as faculty teaching on campus..."

Clarifications

To better understand the position of the ICCB, several clarifications about the system, these rules, and our procedures are in order.

- Earned credentials are the primary evaluation mechanism for determining faculty qualifications. There are no ICCB policies that specifically address tested experience, despite HLC standards in this area. However, given the disparity between the ICCB rules and the HLC standards, it is important that institutions have a policy on tested experience, but understand that the ICCB minimums must be met regardless of that policy.
- What flexibility on credentials that does exist, per the ICCB rules, is included in the following bolded / italicized statement from the ICCB administrative rules, Section 1501.303 Program Requirements, f) Preparation of Professional Staff, to wit:

³ HLC rules require faculty to hold a degree one level above the discipline level being taught with some exceptions.

- “Graduate work through the master's degree in the assigned field or area of responsibility is expected, *except in those areas in which the work experience and related training is the principal learning medium*” as cited above.
- Furthermore, the ICCB allows colleges some discretion in those areas that are not easily classified or where there is some crossover, but most transfer disciplines would not fall in this category. Thus, an individual trained in social work would not be allowed to teach sociology. Conversely, an individual who has 18 graduate hours in drawing courses may or may not be able to teach an art course, based upon the CAOs (or designee’s) assessment of their credentials to teach this course.
- In the fields of music and physical education, the ICCB attempts to provide a greater degree of flexibility given the complicated nature of assessing music faculty (e.g. the performance based aspect of music), and the importance of experience in the physical education space. There are currently no separate rules in these areas, but the agency is cognizant of the challenges in these spaces and will defer to the CAOs as much as is possible in these instances.
- There may be instances where the agency interprets the faculty qualifications rules differently than an institution. In those instances a reasonable discussion, as a part of the recognition process (or other related monitoring processes), is appropriate and may result in no change in the ICCB findings, the movement of a finding from a compliance recommendation to a quality recommendation, or a reversal of the ICCB’s position. Ultimately when examining faculty qualifications, the ICCB is looking for systemic issues. This does not equate to the ability to ignore the rules in individual cases.
- In instances where ICCB standards exceed HLC standards and vice versa, the ICCB standards remain applicable and are NOT superseded by the HLC standards. All relevant standards apply locally (e.g. HLC, ICCB, IBHE, Program accreditation standards, etc.) so it is in the interest of colleges to abide by the highest or most stringent standards. In the future, the agency is considering several rules changes that would bring some of these standards more closely into alignment with the HLC.
- The ICCB standards are minimally acceptable standards. Community colleges are local units of government and local community college boards **have the authority to set standards that exceed the ICCB minimum requirements.**
- For those institutions that have received an extension in order to fully comply with the HLC 18 graduate hour requirement for dual credit instructors, the ICCB is currently honoring those extensions. **This does not translate to an ability to add faculty that do not meet ICCB requirements**, but simply that the ICCB is providing flexibility consistent with the HLC extensions. A request for an extension from the ICCB is not required but institutions must provide copies to the agency of their HLC plan to come into compliance with this requirement.