

# Virginia Community College System

## Qualifications of Faculty Effective July 1, 2005

Qualifications for faculty in the Virginia Community College System are aligned with the Principles of Accreditation of the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS). SACS states:

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:

1. Faculty teaching associate degree courses designed for transfer to a baccalaureate degree: doctor's 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)
2. 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.

In addition to the above two categories of faculty specified by SACS, the VCCS adds the following:

3. Faculty teaching courses designed for non-associate degree occupational fields: high school diploma or equivalent with demonstrated competencies in the teaching field.
4. Faculty teaching developmental courses: bachelor's degree in a discipline related to the teaching assignment and either teaching/occupational experience related to the teaching assignment or graduate training in developmental education.

The accompanying chart (VCCS-29) specifies the normal minimum criteria for each faculty rank. This chart applies to teaching faculty and administrators. For administrators and professional faculty (counselors, and librarians), "teaching effectiveness" refers to effective performance in the primary area of responsibility and "teaching experience" includes professional service in the primary area of responsibility. The chart should be used and interpreted in conjunction with the above general principles, Section 3.2 (Faculty Qualifications) of the VCCS Policy Manual, and the following interpretive specifications

### Interpretive Specifications

- ✍ Fulfillment of normal minimum criteria does not guarantee original placement in, or promotion to, a given rank.
- ✍ Minimum degree requirements for original appointments and promotions must be met.
- ✍ The following are appropriate substitutions for requirements beyond the minimum degree specified for a given rank, which may be used at the discretion of the college.
  - a) Teaching experience beyond the minimum required may be used in lieu of occupational experience at the rate of one year of teaching experience being considered equivalent to a required year of occupational experience.
  - b) Occupational experience beyond the minimum required may be used in lieu of teaching experience at the rate of one year of related occupational experience being considered equivalent to a required year of teaching experience.
  - c) Educational preparation above the requirements for initial placement in rank may fulfill requirements for occupational experience and/or teaching experience at the rate of 30 undergraduate credits being considered equivalent to one year of teaching or occupational experience, and 24 graduate credits being considered equivalent to one year of teaching or occupational experience.
  - d) Certification in lieu of a degree will be possible for initial hiring in Columns 3 and 5. Business, industry and professional certifications may substitute for educational requirements. Equivalencies must be documented, approved by the president, and placed in the personnel file as an attachment to hiring and promotion documents. Sample equivalencies are available on the System website.

- e) Eighteen graduate semester hours of course work related to the teaching field may substitute for the requirement that a bachelor's degree be related to the teaching field.
- f) Measurement of teaching effectiveness for initial appointments is determined through references; for promotions, it is determined using the evaluation ratings for the two previous years.
- g) The MFA Degree for those faculty who teach a majority of classes in studio art, theater, or creative writing areas shall be recognized as a terminal degree. The requirement of the doctoral degree under columns one and two for such faculty will not be necessary; however, these faculty will still need to satisfy the requirements of credits in the teaching field and another requirements for promotion to upper ranks of the professoriate.
- h) In cases where program accreditation agencies recommend specific graduate courses for faculty, those courses should be considered to be "in the teaching field" for VCCS- 29 purposes regardless of the course prefix or other criteria normally used to determine the status of course work.

#### **Interpretive Specifications for Promotions Only**

- ✍ Credit hour equivalency may be granted for no more than a total of 15 semester hours by either a. or b. below or a combination of both during employment with the VCCS.
  - a) Active participation in given learning experiences (c. e. u. classes, workshops, conferences, seminars, etc.) when part of a plan approved by the Community College President applying the following formula: 45 contact hours is equivalent to one semester credit hour.
  - b) Non- teaching work experience directly related to the faculty member's field at a rate not to exceed 1.25 semester credit hours per month of full- time equivalent work experience and not to include work experience applied toward initial appointment.
  
- ✍ Any exceptions to the criteria as outlined in the VCCS-29 must be fully justified and documented in accordance with the Community College's Human Resource Delegation Agreement.