

Date: March 17, 2025

PROPOSAL:

Implementing a new instructor classification to support concurrent instruction at K-State, ensuring instructors meet the necessary credentials for concurrent credit, and creating pathways for concurrent instructors to acquire these credentials.

INTRODUCTION:

In November 2023, the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) Board of Trustees and KBOR revised the Assumed Practices to further clarify that an institution must establish and maintain policies and procedures for determining that faculty are qualified; and that an institution could consider a variety of factors as part of these policies and procedures.

Furthermore, the HLC has drafted "Institutional Policies and Procedures for Determining Faculty Qualifications Guidelines" to support colleges/universities determined "reasonable" procedures in accordance with the newly proposed changes.

- **Achievement of academic credentials** – "An instructor possesses an academic degree relevant to the discipline and at least one level above the level they intend to teach."
- **Progress toward academic credentials** – "Demonstrable, current, and consistent progress toward the academic credential(s) deemed relevant by the institution for an instructor to be qualified."
- **Equivalent experience*** – "Experience commensurate with achievement of academic credentials such that it qualifies an instructor for the instruction (e.g., a minimum threshold of experience; research and/or scholarship; recognized achievement; and/or other activities and factors)." (Experience with classroom instruction as a teacher cannot alone constitute equivalent experience.)

Each institution offering dual credit courses retains sole responsibility for determining if and how its faculty meet HLC's faculty qualifications.

K-State has multiple campuses participating in both dual credit and concurrent credit programs and has been evaluating on the previous HLC guidelines of a master's degree or higher in the teaching discipline taught or a Master's degree in another discipline along with a minimum of 18 graduate credits in the discipline or subject area or related field you will teach. Instructors teaching outside of liberal arts were allowed to consider testing experience for credentialing as well.

While the demand for dual credit programs has expanded, the required credentials for instructors who teach early-college-credit programs has highlighted problems relating to equity, insufficient data and the pipeline of instructor as many instructors struggle to meet the minimum standards, particularly in more rural areas.

The 2021 Legislature enacted House Bill 2134, creating the Kansas Challenge to Secondary School Students Act, the “Kansas Challenge Act.” The 2021 legislation was codified in K.S.A. 72-3220, et seq. K.S.A. 72-3221 states that the purpose of the Kansas Challenge Act is to provide a means that school districts, in cooperation with institutions of postsecondary education, may provide new and exciting challenges to secondary school students by encouraging such students to take full advantage of the wealth of postsecondary educational opportunities available in this state.

In alignment with our access and Land-Grant mission, K-State recommends the following **C16 Concurrent Instructor Credentialing** handbook language to establish concurrent instructor credentials and pathway for instructors to obtain the credentialing if we are to maintain concurrent credit instruction.