

**Higher Learning Commission (HLC) Guidelines on Faculty Qualifications and Concurrent Enrollment
Summary of Information Compiled by Carl Einhaus, Colorado Department of Higher Education
Note: These are Informal Notes – Contact Your Institution’s HLC Liaison with Specific Questions**

Regarding request to HLC to present at the December CEAB Meeting: Due to recent HLC Board action (November 5th) to allow institutions who offer dual credit programs to apply for an implementation “extension” and due to the possibility of further clarifications to the guidelines, HLC would rather wait until they are complete (likely in February 2016) – here is the link to the recent HLC Board action:
<http://www.hlcommission.org/Document-Library/determining-qualified-faculty.html>

- NEW FROM THE NOVEMBER 5th ACTION: Any institution or recognized state consortium can apply by September 2016 for a **five year extension** for these guidelines for CE instructors ONLY – IHE’s will have until September 2022 to comply if approved for the extension. HLC will publish guidelines for the extension application in early 2016. The HLC emphasizes colleges must have a specific plan if applying for an extension. The plan should map out the institution’s current status—how many faculty still need MA and/or graduate hours, how many hours they need, and how you will meet that need. The plan should establish time frame for achieving the goal and should also determine what cost the plan has. Additionally, the IHE should only apply for the number of years they need the extension for, and not just blindly apply for a 5 year extension.

Informal Summary of HLC Guidelines

- HLC does not monitor credentials and qualifications of individual faculty; HLC instead reviews overall faculty hiring practices of the college.
- HLC’s clarification of their “Assumed Practices” was adopted in June 2015, with an effective date of September 1, 2017
- The clarification does not include any new information, but it is moving expectations to an “assumed practice” ... or put differently, from suggestions to requirements
- The clarification is in part due to the growth of concurrent enrollment/dual enrollment programs across the country, and concerns expressed regarding quality and preparation of CE teachers – that institutions of higher education must “assure the quality and integrity of such programs and their comparability to the same programs offered on the institution’s main campus...”
- These guidelines apply to all faculty – regardless if teaching CE courses at the high school or teaching traditional courses on the college campus – quoting the guidelines; “The institution must assure that the faculty members teaching dual credit courses hold the same minimal qualifications as the faculty teaching on its own campus.”

- The faculty credential guidelines:
 - For Academic Programs and Courses (e.g. science, history, psychology, etc.)
 - Master’s Degree (or higher) in the content area being taught (e.g. chemistry, political science, etc.); or
 - Any other Master’s Degree + 18 hours of graduate credit in the specific content area
 - This would apply to any gtPathway course being taught
 - For Career and Technical Education Courses
 - Specific expertise in the area of instruction. This can be demonstrated by a bachelor’s degree in the field and/or a combination of education, training and tested experience
 - IHE’s who use “tested experience” as a basis for hiring must have a well-defined policy and procedure – it should describe a minimum threshold, be consistent and transparent
- Meeting the minimum requirements to be a concurrent enrollment instructor does NOT guarantee being hired by the institution of higher education to teach the CE courses. Most hiring decisions at the community college level are done by the various department chairs are at the discretion of the institution.
- Until this point, there has not been uniformity by IHE’s in following these guidelines.

Updates from DHE:

- DHE is currently supporting teachers to obtain their 18 hours of graduate content through a \$100,000 COSI-grant (cohort of 15 teachers at Adams State) and utilizing our US Department of Education Title IIA grant for an additional \$200,000 to support teachers going back to school for graduate studies in their discipline.
- We are also urging school districts to offer EDU 221 (Intro to Education) as a concurrent enrollment course in the high schools. Not only are there plenty of qualified teachers who already have their M.Ed. (thereby making them eligible to teach education CE courses), but it can help us proactively develop a stronger teacher pipeline. This has become increasingly important as we saw an additional 6% decrease in the number of new teachers coming out of IHEs in 2014-15 (-22.8% over the last five years).