

## Shared Governance Proposal

- I. Date: November 16, 2020
- II. Sponsoring Constituent: Tested Experience Faculty Credential Task Force
  - i. Kevin Humphrey, College of Agriculture
  - ii. Terry Dancer, Neil Griffin College of Business
  - iii. Paul Finnicum, College of Education and Behavioral Science
  - iv. Rajesh Sharma, College of Engineering and Computer Science
  - v. Marcie Hayes, College of Liberal Arts and Communication
  - vi. Amanda Lambertus, College of Sciences and Mathematics
  - vii. Joseph Richmond, College of Nursing and Health Professions
  - viii. Nikesha Nesbitt, University College
  - ix. Donna Caldwell, Faculty Senate President
  - x. Summer DeProw, Academic Affairs
- III. Statement of the Issue: (This should be in a format appropriate for submission to the A-State campus community)

In Spring 2018 A-State submitted an assurance argument for continued regional accreditation with the Higher Learning Commission. The argument contained a paragraph regarding the occasional hiring of faculty who were uniquely qualified but not with the traditional academic qualifications. Here is the paragraph from Criterion 3.C.2 for your review:

*A-State abides by the faculty credential policy of the State of Arkansas and the Higher Learning Commission, requiring faculty to have a degree one level higher than the students being taught. Some exceptions may be made in professional programs (i.e., nursing/health professions, MPA and engineering management) where individuals with strong practical experiences, advanced training and/or certifications may be appointed to faculty positions without possessing the degree one level above the program in which they are teaching. In these cases, the teaching assignment must be justified by the chair and dean with program-specific accreditation considered as appropriate. Requests for faculty who do not meet the academic degree threshold are submitted to the Provost's office via a standardized form. Approval of these assignments are kept to a minimum.*

Since Spring 2018, the “standardized form” mentioned in this statement has been deactivated and other Colleges, departments and/or programs not mentioned in the above statement have requested the opportunity to hire applicants for undergraduate teaching opportunities who possess alternative or “tested experience” credentials.

Tested experience is broadly defined as the instructor having knowledge and skills relevant to the courses, a record of accomplishment throughout their career and profession, and credentials or certifications that confirm expertise in the field. Examples of tested experience would include (though far from limited to): a regionally or nationally recognized pianist with a bachelor’s degree but no master’s degree to teach applied lessons; a professional golfer with several years’ experience competing in professional

golf tournaments and providing lessons while holding professional level certification from the Professional Golfers Association of America (PGA); or an entrepreneur with many years of successful business experience but no master degree to teach entrepreneurship.

Furthermore, HLC distributed an updated policy in September 2020 for determining minimally qualified faculty that raises the standard for using tested experience as the basis for hiring faculty. The latest HLC policy can be found [HERE](#). In summary, the updated HLC policy requires the following:

- Have a well-defined policy
- Evaluation and approval process and a documentation system to demonstrate when such experience is sufficient to determine the faculty member has the expertise necessary to teach in the discipline
- The policy and process should be reviewed and approved by the faculty governance process

The issue at hand is if A-State wants to continue to hire faculty using tested experience in rare and unique circumstances, the institution needs a formal policy, approval process, and documentation system to continue to do so.

- IV. Rational for Proposal: (Please include if this is a new or a modification of an existing policy or procedure)

The rationale for this proposal is to include a tested experience policy with the current faculty credentials section of the A-State Faculty Handbook, establish an approval process, and build a documentation system.

- V. Type of review (i.e., expedited, full, or extended)

Full review

The following pages will outline the policy and processes developed by the Tested Experience Faculty Credential Task Force. The Task Force has compared and contrasted ADHE and HLC's faculty credential policy language and researched tested experience policies and processes at Arizona State University, Northern Illinois University, University of Wyoming, Grand Valley State University, North Dakota State University, Northern Michigan University, University of Northern Colorado, Valdosta State University, University of Central Arkansas, and University of Arkansas Fayetteville. The following is organized into three parts: policy language for the handbook, approval process, and documentation system.

## Policy for Faculty Handbook

*A-State Faculty Handbook excerpt beginning on page 114:*

### V.E. Credentials

All [full-time](#) faculty and academic administrative staff are required to have official transcripts of all academic work on file in the Office of the Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Research. [All part-time faculty are required to have official transcripts and other relevant credentials filed in the human resources hiring database.](#) Faculty must hold degrees from an institution accredited by an accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education, CHEA, or from institutions with comparable status, certification or recognition in other countries.

The following credentials are required to teach at each level:

- General Education: Faculty must hold at least a master's degree with 18 graduate hours in the teaching field.
- Remedial Education: Faculty members must hold at least a baccalaureate degree in the teaching field.
- Associate Level: Faculty must have baccalaureate degree or appropriate industrial-related licensure or certification.
- Baccalaureate Level: Faculty must hold at least a master's degree with 18 graduate hours in the teaching field. Typically, at least 50 percent of the faculty members in each bachelor's degree program must hold the appropriate terminal degree. For career and technical education areas, faculty may hold the master's degree in vocational education with the bachelor's degree in the field of study or the master's degree in vocational education with the appropriate industry-related certification and licensure. A limited number of faculty may hold the bachelor's degree in the teaching field.
- Graduate Level: A majority of the faculty members teaching graduate degree programs must hold the appropriate terminal degree and have demonstrated competency in teach or research at the appropriate graduate level.

{TESTED EXPERIENCE INSERTED HERE}

[In rare and unique circumstances, academic departments or programs may choose to hire applicants for non-tenure track faculty positions based upon their equivalent experience rather than by formal academic credentials. If an instructor does not meet the academic credentials as outlined above, the applicable department and college have the option to request appointment for an instructor to teach course/s based on the applicant's "tested experience."](#)

Tested experience is broadly defined as the instructor having knowledge and skills relevant to the course/s, a record of accomplishment throughout their career and profession, and credentials or certifications that confirm expertise in the field. Tested experience includes a breadth and depth of experience outside of the classroom in real-world situations relevant to the disciplines and course/s in which the faculty member would be teaching.

The tested experience may not be considered for tenure-track positions or for teaching general education, concurrent credit, or graduate courses. Teaching of graduate courses require attaining the graduate faculty status, as outlined on page 117 of the A-State Faculty Handbook.

Department chairs/program directors and college deans are responsible for defining the details of tested experience credentials taking into account the program, programmatic accreditation, course, discipline, and context. The discipline-specific definition of tested experience credentials may originate with department faculty and then flow to the department chair/program director, dean, and provost. However, the applicant must meet the institution's general criteria requirements that establish the minimal qualifications to hire an applicant using tested experience.

The hiring department chair may hire a faculty member (with proper approvals from the dean and provost and providing substantiating evidence) having at least three of the nine general criteria given below, which represents the basis for establishing a minimally qualified faculty.

- Have a bachelor's degree in the discipline or subfield.
- Have a bachelor's degree or higher outside of the discipline or subfield.
- Related licensure or certifications.
- Multiple years of and substantial practical/professional/practitioner experience in a relevant field (e.g., arts, business, technical, legal, or public services sector).
- Relevant clinical experience.
- Demonstrated competence or fluency in a language other than English and demonstrated ability to teach that language.
- Related research experience in industry or government agencies.
- Significant honors, awards and other recognitions related to the course/s content and/or expected learning outcomes.
- Other criteria determined by the departmental faculty, department chair/program director, and dean that specifically relates to the subject matter of the course and provides evidence of the applicant's superior understanding of the course/s content and/or expected learning outcomes.

The documentation requirements for hiring an applicant using tested experience must include the following:

- Completion of the *Tested Experience Evaluation and Approval Form*. The completed and signed form must be electronically saved in the applicant's file in the Human Resources hiring database.
- Substantiating evidence of applicant's three general criteria added to the applicant's file in the Human Resources hiring database.
- These documents (*Tested Experience Evaluation and Approval Form* and substantiating evidence) must be electronically loaded into the applicant's file in the Human Resources hiring database prior to the applicant's approval for compensation.

## **Approval Process**

The approval process requires the following:

1. Completion of the *Tested Experience Evaluation and Approval Form* (see appendix for form)
2. Presentation of authenticating evidence at the time of form signature by chair, dean, and provost
3. Upload the signed *Tested Experience Evaluation and Approval Form* and authenticating evidence to applicant's file in Taleo

## **Documentation System**

Documentation of an applicant's credentials under the Tested Experience policy is important for faculty credential evaluation during a specialized accreditation or regional accreditation site visit. Additionally, ADHE may request faculty credentials occasionally. A-State's hiring database, Taleo, will serve as the document repository and electronic approval system for compensation. The documentation system and steps for building a thorough applicant file are as follows:

1. The *Tested Experience Evaluation and Approval Form* and authenticating evidence must be uploaded into the applicant's file in Taleo.

The screenshot shows the Taleo Candidates interface. On the left is a navigation sidebar with sections for 'Quick Search' (Candidate Keywords, Advanced Search, Candidate First Name, Candidate Last Name) and 'Recently Viewed' (David Dyer Arnold, Madelyn Carson, Mary Elizabeth Spen...). The main content area shows a candidate profile with tabs for 'Full View', 'Offers', 'Short View', 'Work History', and 'Contact & Interviews'. Below the tabs is a table of offer letters:

| Last Updated    | Creator        | Requisition                         | Status   |
|-----------------|----------------|-------------------------------------|----------|
| 8/12/20 3:18 PM | Deprow, Summer | Graduate Assistant 12 Mo - [G09921] | Accepted |

Below the table are sections for 'Resume and Cover Letter', 'Resume Preview', and 'Attachments'. A red box highlights the 'Attachments' section with the text 'Upload form and documents here'.

- When completing the Taleo Offer Letter Template, one question will be added to alert all approvers the applicant is being hired under the Tested Experience policy.

**Offer Letter Details:** Red = Required Information

\* **Requisition:** Administrative Specialist II - [09027C] [View](#)

\* **Offer Template:** None selected

\* **Title:**

\* **Working Title:**

\* **Employment type:** -Please select-

\* **Supervise FT Emps?:** Yes / No

\* **Anticipated Start Date:**

Tested Experience: Yes or No dropdown choice will be added

**The Salary field will populate the Offer Letter - please type (Annual Salary in this format \$##,###.##) and (Hourly Salary in this format \$#.##)**

\* **Annual or Hourly Salary:**

Shift Pay: No

**Please Type Evaluation Manager's Name Below**

\* **Evaluation Manager:**

**Please use the next three boxes to fill in the Time and Attendance Approver's Last Name, ID Number, and Time Sheet Org**

\* **Manager:** -Please select-

\* **Supervisor's ID:**


- 3. Applicants hired using the Tested Experience policy will typically be adjuncts. The current question regarding adjuncts, class prefix and number, section number, and CRN will remain and is a response is required.

**Supervisor and Leave/Time Approver Must be the Same Employee**

Timesheet Orgn can be found in Internet Native Banner on the NTRRQUE screen by searching the Supervisor's name

\* Supv's Timesheet Orgn:   
Format: #####

\* Dept Phone Number:   
Format: #####-####

HR Use - Expiration Date:  

\* Contract Term:

\* International Sponsorship:

\* Current Employee:

Student/Employee ID:

**Additional Information for Offer Approver - may include items related to a Graduate Assignment such as Grant Funding Source or Salary Justifications.**

**For Adjuncts - Please include the Class Number Section and CRN in the comments below.**

Comments:

## Appendix



### Tested Experience Evaluation and Approval Form

Prior to completing this form, please read the Tested Experience policy in the A-State Faculty Handbook beginning on page 114. Additionally, please collect the necessary evidence to authenticate the applicant's tested experience credentials. Authenticating evidence must be presented to the chair, dean, and provost at the time of signature. These documents and this signed form must be uploaded to the applicant's file in Taleo prior to approval for compensation.

- 1. Provide applicant name and supporting College and Department information

**Applicant Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**College:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Department:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Discipline:** \_\_\_\_\_

- 2. List the course/s the applicant will teach.

| Term/Year | Course/s Prefix & Number | Course Title | Section Number/s |
|-----------|--------------------------|--------------|------------------|
|           |                          |              |                  |
|           |                          |              |                  |
|           |                          |              |                  |

- 3. The A-State Tested Experience policy requires an applicant have documented evidence for three of the following nine general criteria. Indicate the three general criteria and describe how the credential, professional experience, certification, or other criteria supports the course content and/or expected course learning outcomes.

Have a bachelor's degree in the discipline or subfield.

Describe how this general criterion supports the course content and/or expected course learning outcomes:

Have a bachelor's degree or higher outside of the discipline or subfield.

Describe how this general criterion supports the course content and/or expected course learning outcomes:

Related licensure or certifications.

Describe how this general criterion supports the course content and/or expected course learning outcomes:

Multiple years of and substantial practical/professional/practitioner experience in a relevant field (e.g., arts, business, technical, legal, or public services sector).

Describe how this general criterion supports the course content and/or expected course learning outcomes:

Relevant clinical experience.

Describe how this general criterion supports the course content and/or expected course learning outcomes:

Demonstrated competence or fluency in a language other than English and demonstrated ability to teach that language.

Describe how this general criterion supports the course content and/or expected course learning outcomes:

Related research experience in industry or government agencies.

Describe how this general criterion supports the course content and/or expected course learning outcomes:

Significant honors, awards and other recognitions.

Describe how this general criterion supports the course content and/or expected course learning outcomes:

Other criteria determined by the departmental faculty, department chair/program director, and dean that specifically relate to the subject matter of the course and provides evidence of the applicant's superior understanding of the course/s objectives

Describe how this general criterion supports the course content and/or expected course learning outcomes:

4. Does the program in which these courses are offered have specialized accreditation?

Yes. Name of specialized accreditor: \_\_\_\_\_ (\*Specialized Accreditation Coordinator/Director signature required)

No.

5. If you responded to question 4 in the affirmative, please explain how the applicant meets the specialized accreditor's standard for faculty credentials.

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|  |                  |             |
|--|------------------|-------------|
| <b>Print</b>   | <b>Signature</b> | <b>Date</b> |
| <b>*Specialized Accreditation Coordinator/Director</b> |                  |             |

**APPROVED BY:**

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|                               |                  |             |
|-------------------------------|------------------|-------------|
| <b>Print</b>                  | <b>Signature</b> | <b>Date</b> |
| <b>Chair/Program Director</b> |                  |             |

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|              |                  |             |
|--------------|------------------|-------------|
| <b>Print</b> | <b>Signature</b> | <b>Date</b> |
| <b>Dean</b>  |                  |             |

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|                      |                  |             |
|----------------------|------------------|-------------|
| <b>Print</b>         | <b>Signature</b> | <b>Date</b> |
| <b>VCAAR/Provost</b> |                  |             |

**Documentation shall be maintained in the department file and Taleo.**