

## Interpreting Faculty Qualifications

MACTE wants to recognize the important work of this board and thank you for your engagement and efforts. We, as teacher educators, are also teachers and we share a profession; we appreciate the opportunity to work together, collegially, to achieve our mutual goal of a highly prepared teacher workforce.

One goal that MACTE would like to address is the determination of faculty qualifications within the rule for unit approval, and we recommend the development of a structure for these determinations. A continuing issue of concern are the criteria used for determining faculty qualifications. While the specific requirements are set in statute, our institutions wish to engage the board collegially in a consideration of the board guidance to institutions that has been used to implement that statute. (see separate document)

Our concerns stem from conflicting experiences between institutions that suggest the criteria for faculty qualifications to teach methods courses at the elementary level may be applied differently. Institutions have experienced the problem of changes between site visits where the same faculty member can be qualified during one visit and found to be unqualified on another visit; a lack of clarity over what constitutes sufficient experience at the level of the license; sufficient experience in the content; and what determines acceptable “advanced academic preparation.”

We ask for an opportunity to engage our professional educational colleagues on the board in an examination of the current criteria and a discussion of alternatives. We seek criteria that fully meet the intent and letter of statute and are reasonable in addressing the way faculty are prepared; flexible to better accommodate the range of faculty engaged in undergraduate, graduate, non-traditional, and alternative pathways; and can be applied consistently.

### **Rule: 8705.0200 Definitions:**

**Subp.2. Advanced Academic Preparation.** “Advanced academic preparation” means a minimum of a master’s degree and content expertise in the licensure subject to be taught. (1.12-1.14)

**Subp. 8. Qualifications and assignment of faculty.** The unit must demonstrate qualifications and assignment of the professional education faculty that include the following:

A. The unit ensures that all education faculty are qualified by advanced academic preparation for the faculty member’s current assignments; ... (8.6-8.10)

H. The unit ensures that all faculty who are assigned to teach content-specific methods courses have advanced academic preparation, and have at least one academic year of prekindergarten through grade 12 teaching experience in that content area and scope; (9.5-9.7)

Subp. 8 seems to indicate that the ‘content expertise’ noted in the definition would be the one year of teaching experience noted in H. Board staff interpretation of the definition at some site visits has looked for a master’s degree in a content area, such as mathematics for those teaching Elementary Math Methods. The definition in rule requires a master’s degree, but does not indicate that the master’s degree needs to be in any specific area. A master’s degree in Education should be sufficient for those teaching methods courses in Early Childhood and Elementary Education where faculty are teaching pedagogical best practices in a variety of content areas (mathematics, science, social studies, health, physical education, music, art, etc.).

At the secondary/K-12 level, the board may want to adopt the level of preparation required by the Higher Learning Commission for those teaching post-secondary classes in a high school, which will be a master’s degree plus 18 credits in the specific content area.

Another consideration may be whether an institution is using a methods course to also meet content standards. If so, advanced preparation could reasonably involve additional coursework in the content area; if not, a master’s degree in education should be sufficient preparation for teaching pedagogical strategies in a methods of teaching content course.