

**SOUTH DAKOTA SCHOOL OF MINES &
TECHNOLOGY**

Policy Manual

SUBJECT: Faculty Qualifications

NUMBER: Policy 2-2 (formerly Policy II-2)

REVISED: January 2026

Each academic department must ensure that faculty in the department with teaching responsibilities are appropriately qualified. South Dakota Mines utilizes academic credentials as the primary mechanism to determine faculty qualifications. When appropriate for the discipline, alternative qualifications may be established.

The following requirements are rooted in faculty qualification expectations set forth by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC).

The [Faculty Qualification Guidelines](#) for each academic department are made available online.

1. Academic Credential Qualification:

- Each faculty member with teaching responsibilities must possess an academic credential in the discipline, sub-discipline, or related field in which they teach.
- The academic credential must be at least one level above that of the courses they are teaching:
 - o Faculty teaching in undergraduate programs must possess a degree in the discipline, sub-discipline, or related field at least one level above (i.e. master's degree). A faculty member who possesses a master's degree or higher in a discipline other than that in which they are teaching, must have completed at least 18 graduate credit hours relevant to delivering quality and effective instruction in the discipline.
 - o Faculty teaching in graduate programs must possess a terminal degree in the discipline, sub-discipline, or related field (i.e. doctoral degree), with an appropriate record of scholarship, research, or achievement.
- The standard practice at South Dakota Mines requires a faculty to have earned the academic credential prior to being qualified. In limited circumstances, it may be appropriate for a discipline to allow a faculty to be provisionally qualified while making progress toward the academic credential. In those circumstances, the Department Head and Provost (or designee) will collaborate to establish and document the requirements for the faculty member's provisional qualification and timeline to achieve full qualification. The timeline for a provisionally qualified faculty to achieve full qualification may not exceed two years from the date of initial provisional qualification.

2. Alternative Qualifications:

- In limited circumstances, it may be appropriate for a discipline to establish and utilize

alternative qualifications.

- Alternative qualifications must demonstrate that a prospective faculty possesses extensive breadth and depth of experience outside the classroom in situations that are equivalent to the degree level and specific content relevant to the discipline that will be taught to ensure the faculty member possesses the content knowledge and expertise necessary and appropriate to deliver quality instruction in the discipline.
- Because alternative qualifications are unique to a particular discipline, an academic department seeking to utilize alternative qualification must ensure that the alternative qualifications are developed and approved through the faculty shared governance process of the academic department.

Department heads shall complete a [Faculty Qualification Verification Form](#) for instructional faculty.

Originated: Academic Affairs, October 2023

Revision History: University Cabinet, May 2024, January 2026

BOR Policy/Committee References: [BOR Policy 4.4.7](#), [BOR Policy 4.4.6](#), [BOR Policy 4.4.2](#), [AAC Guidelines 2.7.1.B\(1\)](#)