

FACULTY QUALIFICATIONS POLICY

PURPOSE: To define qualifications required for faculty members teaching at the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture (NCTA).

Minimum qualifications

Faculty teaching general education courses, or other non-occupational courses, hold a master's degree or higher in the discipline or subfield. If a faculty member holds a master's degree or higher in a discipline or subfield other than that in which he or she is teaching, that faculty member should have completed a minimum of 18 graduate credit hours in the discipline or subfield in which they teach.

The preferred qualification for NCTA faculty is a doctoral degree. For occupational courses, the minimum qualification required for all teaching personnel at the college is a bachelor's degree in a discipline relevant to what they are teaching unless certified based upon approved industry experience.

Background

Faculty qualification requirements are determined by best practices in higher education and are guided by accreditation requirements (details here: <https://www.ncahlc.org/Document-Library/determining-qualified-faculty.html>).

Qualified faculty are identified primarily by credentials, but other factors may be considered in addition to the degrees earned. In some cases, such as in practice-oriented disciplines or programs, tested experience in the field may be needed as much as the formal educational preparation at the prescribed level in determining what students should know to practice. In exceptional circumstances, a faculty member may be hired based on equivalent industry experience rather than academic credentials. In those instances, two years' experience (4,000 hours) may be considered equivalent to one year of education if it is within the discipline to be taught. Requests for exemptions must be submitted in writing to the Dean prior to interviewing candidates who do not possess the minimum academic credentials. Dean's approval is required before bringing these candidates to campus for interviews.

Credential Acquisition

Any permanent full-time faculty member hired after August 2015 without a bachelor's degree must secure a relevant bachelor's degree within five years of starting employment. While employed at NCTA, the faculty member must document regular progress towards acquisition of a bachelor's degree. A bachelor's degree intended to improve teaching competence would be considered a relevant bachelor's degree.

Any permanent full-time faculty member hired after August 2015 with a bachelor's degree but without a master's degree must secure a relevant master's degree within five years of starting employment. While employed at NCTA, the faculty member must document regular progress towards acquisition of a master's degree. A master's degree intended to improve teaching competence would be considered a relevant master's degree however faculty should have completed a minimum of 18 graduate credit hours in the discipline or subfield in which they teach. Promotion beyond the rank of instructor requires the acquisition of a Masters degree.

NCTA faculty without a relevant doctorate are encouraged to secure that degree. Promotion to the rank of professor requires the acquisition of a doctoral degree.