

**What change(s) are you proposing to your department's tenure and promotion credentials? Please indicate the rank(s) (tenured assistant, associate, full) for which the credential should be applied.**

The Criminal Justice Program seeks to update the requirements for tenure and promotion for faculty in the criminal justice program. We seek to add criteria to be included under Appendix A of the Fairmont State faculty handbook that identifies criteria relevant to assessing if a faculty member is professionally qualified. For those applying for tenure, assistant professor status, and associate professor status.

**What are your current T&P credentials for this/these position(s)?**

The current tenure and promotion credentials are the standard requirements set by the University. We seek to specify alternative credentials related to professional qualification in lieu of a PH.D., to be included in Appendix A of the faculty handbook.

**Please explain the general method to obtain the credential(s) proposed.**

To be professionally qualified a candidate should have:

1. A Master's degree in criminal justice; and
2. Professional certification appropriate to their assigned teaching; and
3. Significant law enforcement experience (at least 5 years) relevant to their assigned teaching load; and
4. Have extensive and substantial documented successful teaching experience in the area of law enforcement.

Some examples of professional certification include police academy certification, and a host of additional qualifications across a wide breadth of offerings completed as in-service training.

**Why are you proposing this/these change(s)? Please address how or if the proposed changes are consonant with the existing credentials.**

The alternative credentials are specific to faculty teaching law enforcement specialized courses. This area of focus benefits greatly from faculty members with a combination of higher education and applied knowledge in the field. For example, our crime scene analysis and firearms classes could not conceivably be taught by someone without considerable experience. The Police Operations class would also benefit greatly by being taught by someone with experience in the area of policing.

Recruiting qualified faculty candidates specializing in policing has been a significant challenge for our program. Those that have a Ph. D generally do not have the needed experience and vice versa. It is the collective judgement of the criminal justice faculty that the needed experience is more important when considering our policing needs.

Our alternative credentials mirror those of other programs that have been approved in the past and our circumstances are similar.

**Will these changes have any effect on program accreditation? Please explain.**

No. The program is not currently externally accredited. There is no national accreditation body for criminal justice programs. The Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences (ACJS) has “Quality Standards for College/University Criminal Justice/Criminology Baccalaureate Degree Programs” but does not provide external accreditation. Relevant to this issue is ACJS standard C.4 which provides that two-thirds of all full-time faculty in baccalaureate degree programs hold either 1) a PhD in criminal justice/criminology or a closely related social science discipline, or 2) a JD and a Master’s degree in criminal justice/criminology or a closely related social science discipline, or 3) a JD and demonstrated relevant experience in criminal justice/criminology (e.g., area of practice). With the hiring of an assistant professor using the professionally qualified standards proposed the program would have five full-time positions. Four of the five would meet the above criteria, thus making the program compliant with the two-thirds requirement.

Additionally, and significantly, the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) guidelines recognize the role of equivalent experience in faculty qualifications.

Equivalent experience means experience that is commensurate with achievement academic credentials such that it qualifies an instructor for the instruction. This could include through a minimum of threshold experience; research and/or scholarship; recognized achievement and/or other activities and factors.

**Equivalent experience may differ by discipline or program.** (emphasis added)

Previous years of classroom experience instruction alone does not alone constitute equivalent experience. See: Higher Learning Commission Guidelines: Institutional Policies and Procedures for Determining Faculty Qualifications: HLC’s Criteria for Accreditation and Assumed Practices effective November 2023. Criterion 3.

Teaching and Learning: Quality. Resources and Support.