

Frequently Asked Questions

[Faculty Qualifications for Teaching Online Policy I-72](#)

Updated 9/10/2022 by the Dean of Learning Resources and Online Learning

Will adjuncts be compensated for the certification process?

- This is a fairly large time commitment, and adjuncts are already minimally compensated for the work they do. This policy would likely push many away and/or negatively impact relationships/ student instruction. Our current intention is to include training that leads to meeting this qualification as part of workload, which means they will be compensated for that time.

Initially, how long will faculty have to obtain this qualification, and will there be grandfathering options for existing qualifications to be considered?

- All faculty teaching online will be expected to meet this qualification within one year of the policy going into effect.
- At the time the policy is implemented, existing qualifications obtained within the past five years will be considered by the School Dean or supervisor.
- After initial qualification, faculty will be expected to renew every five (5) years.

What other certifications outside of Virginia Western would be considered to meet this policy?

- Training related to teaching and learning online from other outside organizations of similar quality and duration will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Determination of relevance will be made by the appropriate School Dean in consultation with members of the OLIT staff as appropriate. A certificate or some other form of documentation of completion should be presented to the appropriate School Dean upon completion.
- For initial qualifications, the Virginia Western *TOC* is highly preferred, as it provides an orientation to teaching online that includes practices and policies specific to Virginia Western.

Below is a list of suggested outside training organizations that deliver high-quality training in the area of online teaching and learning and links to their training menus.

Outside Training Recommendations:

Online Learning Consortium (OLC) –

<https://onlinelearningconsortium.org/learn/>

Quality Matters (QM) –

<https://www.qualitymatters.org/professional-development>

American College and University Educators (ACUE) –

https://acue.org/?acue_courses=acues-effective-practice-framework

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When is training offered that will satisfy this policy and who pays for it if completed outside of VWCC?

- OLIT plans to offer ongoing no-cost training options that will satisfy the policy. Trainings will include introductory, intermediate, and advanced level professional learning opportunities. The *Virginia Western Teaching Online Certification (TOC)* courses will be offered continuously with rolling admission in a self-paced asynchronous modality.
- If a faculty member prefers to seek external training to meet the policy requirement, they may do so (with approval from their Dean); however, any cost of external training will be the responsibility of the faculty member. Funding sources may occasionally be available from inside and outside the college. Faculty interested in seeking funding can work with their School Dean and the OLIT office to identify potential sources.
- Information about the Virginia Western *TOC*, including course descriptions and the time commitments can be found here:
<https://www.viriniawestern.edu/olit/teaching-online-certification/>

What is the logic/reasoning behind this policy and why are the teaching qualifications different than face to face?

- As our college, and higher education in general, moves towards a model where online learning options are expected, it is important that our faculty are well-prepared to teach in this modality. Teaching online carries inherent challenges and is fundamentally different from creating and offering a course face to face. State and federal authorities, along with our accreditors (e.g. VCCS, SCHEV, SACSCOC, US DOE), all recognize that online learning (or distance learning) is so different from face to face that specific policies and requirements are necessary.
- Virginia Western is committed to providing faculty with high-quality professional learning opportunities to design and deliver courses in the ever-evolving online environment. We take seriously the obligation to our students to make online part of our culture so that we are consistently providing quality online learning experiences designed and led by trained instructors.

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What is the old/current policy?

- Before this policy was passed, there was no specific policy for online teaching qualifications. The Full Time Faculty Evaluation Plan contained language related to the qualifications of newly hired faculty who are teaching online. This language should now match this policy. We have had an informal process for years that facilitated new online faculty attending an orientation with our instructional designer.

Is this a SACSCOC requirement?

- To the best of our knowledge, there is not a specific SACSCOC standard that requires specific qualifications/certifications to teach online. However, in 2020, SACSCOC published the document linked to below that requires the college to ensure online faculty are, “appropriately qualified and effectively supported.”

Guidelines for the Evaluation Of Distance Education

<https://sacscoc.org/app/uploads/2020/09/Guidelines-for-Evaluation-of-Distance-Education.pdf>