

Committee on Educational Policy
Policy on Appropriate Instructors for Courses

Under Senate By-law 13.17.5, CEP is empowered to condition approval of curricula on the "appropriateness of the assignment of" particular instructors to particular courses.

In carrying out this responsibility, as applied to new course approval, the Committee normally examines the fit between an instructor's fields of competence and the intellectual requirements of the particular courses he or she proposes to teach.

A problem of some subtlety and importance arises when a member of the regular faculty proposes to teach a course with subject matter different a priori from the areas in which he or she nominally has professional competence. The Committee does not interpret the rules of the University literally to require that the faculty teach only in their nominal areas of competence¹. Rather, it takes the view that the teaching of innovative courses supports the self-renewal and intellectual growth essential to the faculty of a research university, and is integral to the creation of new knowledge.

In such cases, the Committee therefore requests threshold evidence of serious intent, beyond the information normally presented on the course approval form. Such evidence may include: professional publications; unpublished scholarly manuscripts; a detailed statement from the instructor detailing the relationship between the proposed course and new research; or other material that clearly establishes the instructor's scholarly intentions.

Approved by the Committee on Educational Policy on March 26, 1986

¹ The Preamble to the Faculty Code of Conduct states that "[e]ffective performance" of the faculty's "central functions requires that faculty members be free within their respective fields of competence to pursue and teach the truth in accord with appropriate standards of scholarly inquiry." Our stress here is on scholarly standards, rather than upon ephemeral notions of fields of competence whose boundaries in any case must shift if the University's intellectual vitality is to be maintained.