

Faculty/Student Policy - Communication Proficiency

Policy Statement:

This policy is designed to be consistent with Section 15-10-13.1 of the North Dakota Century Code and SBHE Policy 609 – Communications Proficiency, which states that “each institution shall establish a process for verifying communication skills, including written English language proficiency and ability to speak English clearly and with good pronunciation, of all personnel whose appointments include classroom instruction.” The process includes procedures ensuring compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and prohibits discrimination against a qualified individual with disabilities. The process guarantees protection against discrimination in violation of other rights protected under federal and state constitutions or laws and Board policies to the best of the institution’s ability.

Employment Process for full-time faculty:

1. Prior to employment, the communications proficiency of the finalists in the applicant pool will be determined through the following methods:
 - All candidate searches shall require submission of writing samples (specific items to be determined by the hiring committee as are appropriate to the particular field of inquiry). A prospective instructor’s written communication skills will be assessed on the basis of the application packet (i.e., Statement of Teaching Philosophy) and correspondence received during the search process. Search committee members will indicate their evaluation of the candidate’s proficiency and ability to communicate in writing on the written communication portion of the Interview Evaluation form.
 - All interviewed candidates for full-time faculty positions involving teaching responsibilities must give an oral presentation as part of the interview process. Search committee members will be required to respond to a question on the Interview Evaluation form, indicating whether or not the candidate has adequate oral communication skills to be sufficiently understandable for instructional purposes. The department chair shall provide a statement for inclusion in the hired candidate’s personnel file, that the committee does not question the oral English proficiency of the hired person.
 - A regular contract may not be offered until the department chair provides a written statement of communication proficiency for the position opening and applicant’s file.

2. Part-time (adjunct) faculty with teaching responsibilities.
 - Part-time faculty sometimes are not hired through an open search process. The department responsible for making the decision to hire them shall assess their oral and written proficiency in English on the basis of the application packet and telephone/in person interview. The department chair shall provide a statement for inclusion in the hired candidate's file, that the committee does not question the oral English proficiency of the hired person.

Continuous Improvement in Communication Proficiency:

The evaluation by students and department chairs of all faculty are conducted on an annual basis. Students remain anonymous in this process. The appropriate department chair shall assess all such data for the division, and the Provost and Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs shall assess all such data for the college. They shall make recommendations to individual faculty if developmental work related to English proficiency is required. Faculty falling into this category will be assigned a mentor/coach to improve the quality of communication.

Students affected by the communications proficiency policy may register concerns related to the provisions of this policy with the appropriate department chair. The department chair in consultation with the appropriate Academic Dean will recommend whatever action is deemed necessary to address the concerns and will implement the recommended action. Further, at any time during the school year if a student is having problems with the language proficiency of an instructor, that student may visit with the faculty member's department chair without fear of repercussions by the department chair or the faculty member. If the matter is not resolved, the student may take the complaint to the appropriate Academic Dean who will then consult with the Provost and Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs until the matter is resolved.

Any communication difficulty caused by a physical or mental impairment or disability is subject to normal ADA procedures. If the communication impairment or disability interferes with student learning and becomes the subject of student complaints, reasonable accommodation(s) may be provided, in accord with BSC and SBHE policies, as appropriate.

The Communication Proficiency Policy will be included in the BSC Faculty Handbook and Student Handbook.

Reference:

[SBHE Policy 609 Communications Proficiency](#)
North Dakota Century Code Section 15-10-13.1

History of This Policy:

First policy draft approved by the President's Cabinet on August 23, 2005.

Revisions – October 20, 2009; reviewed by the Operations Council on October 23, 2013 and approved by the Executive Council on October 30, 2013; August 4, 2014; September 8, 2016.