

Chapter 7 – Human Resources

AP 7211 Minimum Qualifications and Equivalencies

References:

Education Code Sections 87001, 87003, 87359 and 87743.2; Title 5 Sections 53400 et seq.; ACCJC Accreditation Standard III.A.2-4

Minimum Qualifications

Faculty shall meet the minimum qualifications established by the Board of Governors, or shall possess qualifications that are at least equivalent to the minimum qualifications set out in the regulations of the Board of Governors. In addition, for disciplines not requiring a master's degree, all professional experience in the discipline must be occupational in nature as per Title 5, Section 53404.

Equivalencies

Equivalency Committee: An Academic Senate Equivalency Committee shall be established to fulfill the requirement of Education Code Section 87359, which states that the equivalency process “shall include reasonable procedures to ensure that the Board of Trustees relies primarily upon the advice and judgment of the Academic Senate to determine that each individual employed under the authority granted by the regulations possesses qualifications that are at least equivalent to the applicable minimum qualifications...” In order to ensure that the Board of Trustees relies primarily on the advice and judgment of the Academic Senate, the Academic Senate equivalency committee shall:

- recommend all equivalency determinations to the Board of Trustees;
- further clarify the criteria to be used for determining equivalency’
- ensure that careful records are kept of all equivalency determinations’
- work with disciplines to review all established equivalencies for currency and accuracy every four years;
- periodically review this procedure and recommend necessary changes to the Academic Senate and Board of Trustees; and
- in general, ensure that the equivalency process works well and meets the requirements of the law.

The Equivalency Committee will recommend criteria for equivalencies to the minimum qualifications for disciplines. The committee shall consist of eight members: the Academic Senate President, four faculty appointed by the Academic Senate President, one instructional manager appointed by the Chief Instruction Officer, one representative from Human Resources appointed by the Chief Human Resources Officer, and one representative from non-credit instruction appointed by the Academic Mutual Agreement Council. The terms of the appointments are for three years. If a vacancy occurs, appropriate replacements may be made at any time.

Determination of Equivalencies: The following procedures are to be used to determine equivalency status of any potential faculty applicant and the process for disciplines to request equivalency status. The procedure is intended to ensure a fair and objective process for determining when an applicant has the equivalent qualifications. It is not intended to grant waivers for lack of the required qualifications.

All faculty position announcements shall state the required qualifications as specified by the Disciplines List, including the possibility of meeting these qualifications via an equivalency. In addition, all announcements shall state any required occupational licenses or certificates, if applicable.

The Office of Human Resources shall first screen all applications for minimum qualifications. In cases where it is unclear whether minimum qualifications are met, the Office of Human Resources shall consult the Academic Senate President.

Applications of candidates who do not meet minimum qualifications shall be sent to the Academic Senate President to determine if the candidate meets an established equivalency. Department members of the screening committee may choose to review all of these applications and consult with the Academic Senate President to establish whether a candidate may meet an established equivalency. The Academic Senate President shall review the applicants' materials and shall send a decision concerning equivalency or non-equivalency to the Office of Human Resources before candidates are notified of interviews.

Equivalencies to Minimum Qualifications (Full-time and Part-time)

The following process and criteria are used to determine equivalencies to minimum qualifications for both full- and part-time faculty:

A. General Principles Applying to All Equivalencies

1. Equivalencies supersede limited credentials.
 - a. Degrees and credits generally must be from accredited institutions (Title 5, Section 53406).
 - b. An occupational license or certificate is required in certain instances (Title 5, Section 53417).
 - c. Whenever a master's degree is mentioned, any degree beyond the master's will also satisfy that qualification.
2. A district may hire a person who possesses qualifications different from, but equivalent to, those listed on the disciplines list, according to criteria and procedures agreed upon by the governing board and the Academic Senate. Equivalencies must be "at least equivalent" to the State Minimum Qualifications (Title 5, Section 53430).
3. Prior to taking effect, equivalencies must be approved by the Academic Senate.

4. Part-time faculty hired under a previous minimum qualification or equivalency shall be permitted continuous employment. For the purpose of this AP, lapse in employment may not exceed two years to be considered “continuous.” Any lapse in employment longer than two years requires that the faculty member re-qualify under the current minimum qualification or equivalency.
5. Part-time experience will be prorated towards the experience requirement unless excluded by the equivalency.

B. Process by Which Individual Equivalencies are Granted

1. Departments which desire equivalencies must submit the proposed equivalencies in their discipline(s) to the Academic Senate for approval. Upon approval, copies will be filed in the Academic Senate Office and will be made available online.
2. Departments may determine:
 - a. To “not use equivalencies” for hiring;
 - b. To specify acceptable additional (alternative) standards to the State Minimum Qualifications; and
 - c. To specify replacement standards that supersede the State Minimum Qualifications.
3. A faculty member in the discipline and the Department Chair must both sign off to validate the equivalency.
4. Departments will be given the opportunity each fall to evaluate the guidelines they are using to grant equivalencies and may submit revisions to the Equivalency Committee. All equivalencies must be reviewed every four years to ensure currency.

The Academic Senate Equivalency Committee shall review equivalency requests to determine whether the equivalency proposed is in fact equivalent to the stated minimum qualifications. The committee will consider related degrees, general education coursework, and specialization of coursework in the given discipline. The Equivalency Committee will forward its recommendation to the Curriculum and Instruction Council. The council will review the equivalency proposal to confirm that all legal requirements related to the equivalency are met and then will forward its recommendation to the Academic Senate body.

C. Options for Consideration for Equivalencies in Disciplines that Require a Master’s Degree

1. A master’s degree in any discipline AND thirty upper division and/or graduate semester units in the discipline AND four years of documented full-time teaching or other occupational experience related to the discipline.
2. A master’s degree in any discipline AND thirty graduate semester units in the discipline.

3. A bachelor's degree in the discipline or a related discipline AND the unit/course equivalent to a master's degree in the discipline AND significant progress toward a doctorate degree subject to degree completion before entering into a contract with the district. Note: Documentation that the degree has been awarded must be submitted before the district will enter into a contract.
4. A bachelor's degree in the discipline AND a master's degree in a related discipline.
5. A bachelor's degree in the discipline or a related discipline AND four years of documented full-time teaching or other occupational work experience related to the discipline AND measurable performance standards. The performance standards to be used must be established by the department and approved by the Academic Senate, and will be included as part of the equivalency statement.

The minimal degree requirements for equivalencies in this area will be a bachelor's degree. Nothing will satisfy this requirement other than the degree itself.

D. Options for Consideration for Equivalencies in Disciplines not Requiring a Master's Degree

1. Completion of 27 semester units of General Education course work including both a transfer level (Freshman) composition course and Intermediate Algebra AND a license or certification in the discipline AND a minimum of 6 years, full time, occupational experience that is directly related to the discipline.
2. An Associate's degree in specified fields AND a minimum of six (6) years, full time, occupational experience that is directly related to the discipline.
3. A Bachelor's degree or higher in any discipline AND a minimum of two (2) years, full time, occupational experience that is directly related to the discipline.

The General Education coursework for all equivalencies is expected to be at least equivalent to that required for an Associate degree.

E. Options for Consideration for Equivalencies in Continuing Education Disciplines

The following process and criteria are used to determine equivalencies to minimum qualifications for both full-and part-time faculty:

1. Equivalency Criteria – The options for Acceptable equivalencies for continuing education disciplines are:
 - a. equivalent degrees by other names or equivalent course work;
 - b. experience in the discipline (for disciplines not requiring a master's degree); and
 - c. possession of a clear California Secondary (Single Subject) Teaching Credential authorizing instruction in the area appropriate for the course.

2. Establishing Criteria – When proposing new or updating old criteria, the process is as follows:
 - a. The equivalency form is completed by the appropriate Continuing Education area supervisor after consultation with faculty in the appropriate discipline and the Dean of Continuing Education;
 - b. The form is forwarded to the chair of the campus Equivalency Committee, with a copy to the Academic Senate Office, and the same process is followed as in credit disciplines; and
 - c. Determining Equivalencies – State law allows districts to establish equivalencies to the degree or experience requirements. If the position announcement allows applicants to have equivalent qualifications or if equivalencies are being considered for a part-time position, the equivalencies must be verified by documentation provided by the job applicant. This documentation will be considered part of the application. The Academic Senate President, using the previously approved equivalency on file, will determine if the applicant's qualifications are indeed equivalent.

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