

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

Equivalencies must be “at least equivalent” to the State Minimum Qualifications (Title 5, Section 53430) and cannot supersede state Minimum Qualifications (MQs).

Equivalency Committee: An Academic Senate Equivalency Committee shall 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...” Per Board Policy 7211, “For determining appropriate equivalencies to the State’s minimum qualifications, the Board agrees to accept the recommendations of the Academic Senate as authorized by Education Code Section 70902(d).” 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:

- make all equivalency determinations and report them to Human Resources;
- further clarify the criteria to be used for determining equivalency;
- work with Human Resources to keep records of all equivalency determinations;
- periodically review this procedure and recommend necessary changes to the Academic Senate and Board of Trustees; and
- in general, ensure that the equivalency process is efficient and meets the requirements of the law.

The Equivalency Committee shall consist of eight members: the Academic Senate President; four additional faculty appointed by the Academic Senate President, including a noncredit faculty member; one alternate faculty member who will vote only when needed to make quorum; one non-voting instructional manager appointed by the Vice President, Instruction; and one non-voting representative from Human Resources appointed by the Vice President, Human Resources. The terms of the appointments are for three years, except for the Human Resources appointment, which may be ongoing, and the Senate President which is for the term of the presidency.

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

All faculty position announcements shall state the required qualifications as specified by the current *Minimum Qualifications for Faculty and Administrators in California Community Colleges* from the Chancellor's Office and the possibility of meeting these qualifications via an equivalency. All announcements shall state any required occupational licenses or certificates, if applicable.

The Office of Human Resources (HR) shall first screen all applications for minimum qualifications. In cases where applicants have submitted an Equivalency Form, indicated an interest in being considered for an equivalency on the application, or it is unclear whether minimum qualifications are met, applications will be made accessible to selected faculty of the screening committee who are discipline experts. They will make equivalency recommendations to the Equivalency Committee. The discipline expert(s) shall be a faculty member in the discipline being hired whenever possible. The discipline expert may be the department chair, committee chair, or any number of faculty on the screening committee who are in the same discipline as the position being hired, or a faculty who meets the minimum qualifications or an equivalent, and shall act as the discipline expert. These recommendations will be forwarded to the Equivalency Committee. The Equivalency Committee will review the documentation of equivalency, consider the recommendations, and make a determination. The Equivalency Committee shall send a decision concerning equivalency or non-equivalency to the Office of Human Resources before candidates are notified of interviews. The Academic Senate President may independently make equivalency decisions based on the department recommendations if an equivalency based on the same qualifications or rationale has been previously granted by the Equivalency Committee.

A list of previously approved local equivalencies by discipline will be updated and maintained as equivalencies are approved, and can be used by candidates as examples of successful equivalencies, but is not to be regarded as an all-inclusive list.

Faculty of the College may also request an equivalency to the minimum qualifications to meet the requirements to be eligible to work in a discipline other than that for which they were originally hired. A faculty member in this situation may submit their materials for review to the Equivalency Committee or to the Department Chair of the additional discipline (a discipline expert will be asked to make a recommendation on the equivalency).

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. The 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.
2. Equivalency forms are *not* required as we have to consider all applicants for equivalency if they do not meet MQs; however, we will continue to encourage candidates indicate interest in being considered for an equivalency and provide necessary documentation.
3. Degrees and credits generally must be from accredited institutions (Title 5, Section 53406).
4. An occupational license or certificate is required in certain instances (Title 5, Section 53417).
5. For positions with MQs requiring a master's degree a degree beyond the master's will also satisfy that qualification.
6. 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.
7. Part-time experience will be prorated towards the experience requirement.
8. Equivalency must be based on documented evidence including transcripts, publications, or work products will be required to make determinations.
9. Decisions on equivalency must consider both how general education, specialization, and experience are met as appropriate for equivalence to the MQ.

B. Process by Which Individual Equivalencies are Granted

1. HR staff verify that applicants have the appropriate credential and appropriate degrees to meet the minimum qualifications on their transcripts. If there is an experience requirement, HR staff will verify that the applicant has the required years of experience, but will not judge if the experience is appropriate. HR then will separate applications into three groups:
 - 1) those which meet MQs, and
 - 2) those that do not meet MQs, and have requested to be considered for an equivalency, and
 - 3) Those that do not clearly meet MQs, but have not indicated an interest in being considered for an equivalency on their application. (Incomplete applications are not moved on from HR and are not considered for equivalency)

Those that meet MQs (group 1) will go directly to be under review by the full screening committee in the online application system; applications that do not clearly meet MQs (groups 2 and 3) will be placed into a separate section in the online application system for limited review for MQs and equivalencies.

2. Faculty members of the screening committee, or a subgroup of the screening committee decided upon by the faculty members of the committee (could be just the department chair), will review the applications and make recommendations with written justification on which applications meet and do not meet MQs or equivalencies. Only a single member needs to review each application for MQ/equivalency, so the applications can be split among faculty.
3. If in reviewing applications that HR forwarded as meeting MQs (group 1), the screening committee determines that the applicant does not meet MQs, the application should be considered for an equivalency.
4. Applications that the discipline expert(s) identify as not meeting MQs or equivalency, and those which are recommended to be granted equivalency, will be forwarded with written justification for the recommendation to the Equivalency Committee to review and make a determination. Equivalencies must be verified by documentation provided by the job applicant.
5. The Equivalency Committee will meet as needed to review and make a determination.
 - a. A discipline faculty who was involved in making the recommendations may attend the Equivalency Committee meeting.
 - b. Determinations must be documented.
 - c. 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 committee will review the equivalency documentation to confirm that all legal requirements related to the equivalency are met and then will forward its determination to Human Resources.
6. The same standards for minimum qualifications and equivalencies apply for applicants for full-time or part-time or adjunct positions.

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

1. A master's degree in a discipline which is not specifically named in "Minimum Qualifications for Faculty and Administrators in California Community Colleges," for the particular discipline in question, but which, when courses (and course descriptions) are carefully reviewed, clearly constitutes parallel and/or closely related coursework to the discipline which is specifically listed in "Minimum Qualifications for Faculty and Administrators in California Community Colleges,"

2. In specific disciplines as named by the "Minimum Qualifications for Faculty and Administrators in California Community Colleges," a bachelor's degree in the discipline, plus licensure by an appropriate state agency, plus at least two years of professional experience, verified in writing, or
3. The equivalent.

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

In order to be considered for equivalency in the case of disciplines not normally requiring a master's degree, the minimum standards shall be one of the following:

1. An associate degree plus six years of related experience.
2. Bachelor's degree plus two years of related experience.
3. Associate degree plus graduation from an institution specific to that field, plus two years of professional experience in the discipline, verified in writing, plus appropriate certification to practice or licensure, if applicable.

The professional experience required (two years/bachelor's degree or six years/associate) must be directly related to the faculty member's teaching assignment.

Pursuant to Title 5 § 53406, all degrees and coursework must be from colleges/universities accredited by one of the intersegmental accrediting agencies: Western Association of Schools and Colleges, Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, New England Association of Schools and Colleges, North Central Associations of Colleges and Schools, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, and Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges.

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, or
 - d. the equivalent.

F. Options for Consideration for Equivalencies based on Eminence

Although no legal definition of eminence exists, eminence shall mean that qualifications which, as evidenced by prominence is established by the specific industry, discipline, or field, and may be deemed equivalent to minimum qualifications. The following process and criteria are used to determine equivalencies to minimum qualifications for both full-and part-time faculty based on eminence:

1. Documentation of qualifications which provide evidence of prominence as established by the specific industry, field, or discipline and may be deemed equivalent to minimum qualifications. This may include appropriate local, state, national or international associations, trade unions, guilds or communities comprised of experts who are themselves renowned in the specific field, and who can attest, in writing, to the prominence and expertise of the applicant, and
2. Eminence alone is not sufficient to grant equivalency. An application of equivalency based on eminence must be accompanied by conclusive evidence that the applicant exemplifies qualities of a college-educated person and brings the college-level knowledge and abilities. The applicant must provide documentation supporting the status of eminence.

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