

Faculty Service Areas, Minimum Qualifications and Equivalency Process

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References:	Education Code Sections 87001, 87003, 87743.2; Title 5, Sections 53400 et seq.; ACCJC Accreditation Standard 3

Faculty Service Areas:

Sierra College has established one (1) faculty service area. This area was established after negotiation and consultation with appropriate faculty representatives.

Minimum Qualifications:

Faculty shall meet minimum qualifications as established by the California Community Colleges Board of Governors, or shall possess qualifications that are at least equivalent to the minimum qualifications as set forth in the Board of Governors’ regulations.

Equivalency Process:

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 governing board 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 shall appoint an Equivalency Committee to:

- Establish equivalency guidelines that reflect Academic Senate primacy for recommendations in this AP to include but not limited to full-time faculty hires, part-time faculty hires, administrative retreat to faculty where clear minimum qualification requirements are unclear, etc.
- Be available for screening and hiring selection committees to determine equivalencies for these committees in a time sensitive manner though requests for equivalencies that fall outside of instructional faculty days, as issues of

compensation and working conditions, are subject to the terms and conditions of the SCFA/District contract.

- Communicate and explain, when requested, the decisions of the Academic Senate Equivalency Committee to the screening or hiring committee as described below.
- 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.
- Periodically review this procedure and recommend necessary changes to the Board of Trustees.
- In general, ensure that the equivalency process works well and meets the requirements of the law.

The Equivalency Committee consists of:

- The Equivalency Committee Chair (appointed by the Academic Senate)
- Two Academic Senators
- One faculty discipline expert
- The division dean
- A representative from Human Resources

The Committee will form and meet as needed. The Dean and Human Resources members serve advisory roles and are nonvoting members.

Determination of Equivalencies -- The following procedure is to be used to determine when an applicant for a faculty position, whether full or part time, although lacking the exact degree or experience specified in the Disciplines' List of the California Community Colleges Board of Governors that establishes the minimum qualifications for hire, nonetheless does possess qualifications that are at least equivalent to those required by the Disciplines' List. 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 will state the required qualifications as specified by the Disciplines' List, including the possibility of meeting the equivalent of the required degree or experience.

District application forms for faculty positions will ask applicants to state whether they meet the minimum qualifications of the Disciplines' List or whether they believe they meet the equivalent. Those claiming equivalency will then be asked to state their reasons and to present evidence. It will be the responsibility of the applicant to supply all evidence and documentation for the claim of equivalency at the time of application.

Equivalency for minimum qualifications in disciplines in which a master's degree is required can be met by the following criteria:

- A master's degree in any discipline, at least 15 semester units of graduate coursework in the required discipline, and additional upper level undergraduate coursework in the discipline to reach a total of 30 semester units in the discipline. If the bachelor's degree is required to meet the minimum qualifications for the discipline, those courses may not also be used to meet equivalency for a master's degree.

OR

- A master's degree in any discipline, at least 15 semester units of graduate coursework in the required discipline, and the equivalent of at least three years of full-time paid work experience (teaching or nonteaching) in the field. The applicant must provide a description of the experience and explain its relevance to the curriculum in the discipline.

OR

- Completion of at least 30 semester units in a required discipline doctoral program in which a master's degree is not awarded.

Applicable to the equivalency criteria above, for the Ethnic Studies discipline only, the required units of discipline specific coursework may be completed entirely with upper division courses, entirely graduate courses, or with any combination of the two.

Equivalency for minimum qualifications in disciplines in which a master's degree is NOT required can be met by the following criteria:

- Evidence of experience and/or coursework that is the equivalent of the general education requirements

AND

- The equivalent of at least six years of full-time experience in the field.

Evidence for the equivalent of the general education requirements may include:

- ✓ Transcripts
- ✓ Publications
- ✓ Industry skills competencies
- ✓ Community service and/or work products
- ✓ Demonstration of ongoing professional development and continuing education within career field.
- ✓ Publication, as author, of relevant materials in the career field.
- ✓ Examples of the presentations of training sessions within the career field.
- ✓ Evidence of providing direct training within the career field.
- ✓ For self-employed applicants, "conclusive evidence of full-time work experience" entails providing credible documentation from outside parties and would include such items as tax records, business license, or other governmental/licensing-board evidence.

The applicant must provide evidence of attaining coursework or experience equal to the general education component of a regular associate or bachelor's degree.

The Equivalency Committee chair and a Human Resources representative or designee will initially examine the minimum qualifications stated by each candidate, and will consult with a discipline expert as needed.

All applicants noting that they qualify for the position based upon an equivalency and any applicants whose qualifications are uncertain shall be referred to the Academic Senate for an equivalency hearing. The human resources participant on the Equivalency Committee or a designee shall be charged with contacting the relevant applicants should any further documentation for an equivalency be required. The Academic Senate Equivalency Committee shall examine each of the relevant applications and determine equivalency prior to the examination of any applications by the hiring/selection committee for the purpose of selecting interviewees and notify the chair of the hiring committee of its decisions. Only applicants who are found to meet the test of equivalency shall be potentially selected for interview. No single subject equivalencies shall be approved by the Sierra College Community College District.

The Academic Senate Equivalency Committee shall employ the following procedures in emergencies or special circumstances:

- In case a candidate to be offered an adjunct or temporary position is also an equivalency claimant, the screening committee shall contact the Academic Senate so as to convene an Equivalency Committee immediately following the identification of a possible hiring and as early in the screening process as possible. The Academic Senate Equivalency Committee shall meet in as timely a manner as possible and communicate their decision regarding the status of the equivalency to the relevant Educational Administrator and/or screening committee chair.
- For the purposes of this procedure, an emergency or special circumstance is defined as a situation in which the full hiring process cannot be carried out in a timely manner. Such situations may include, but are not limited to the following:

Vacancies that occur shortly before the beginning of a session.

1. Additional sections of a class added shortly before the beginning of a session or after the session begins.
2. An unforeseen opportunity, occurring shortly before the beginning of a session, to staff sections in locations, venues, or subject matter specialties for courses which previously have been difficult to schedule (certain off-campus sites, contract education, short courses, etc.).

Eminence: In rare cases, the district will consider equivalencies based upon eminence. Requests for equivalency based upon eminence must necessarily be considered on a case by case basis. The following criteria will be used by the Equivalency Committee to determine whether an equivalence to the minimum qualifications established by the Board of Governors has been met. The candidate for consideration is responsible for providing evidence to support the claim that each of the following criteria has been met.

1. There must be consensus in the discipline's full-time faculty with regards to the recommendation for this equivalency.
2. The candidate must be nationally recognized for their contribution to the subject matter of the discipline.
3. The candidate's contribution to the subject matter of the discipline must span a sufficient range of the diversity of topics within the discipline to constitute a full equivalence to the minimum qualifications for the discipline and not merely a constitutive portion of the subject matter covered by the discipline.
4. The candidate's application must also demonstrate a breadth of knowledge equivalent to the General Education requirements established by the requisite degrees required by the Minimum Qualifications set by the Board of Governors.

See Board Policy 7211.