

Submitted to the Academic Senate by Michael Wyly on 1 May 2017.

Proposed Changes to the Equivalency Determination Procedure at Solano Community College (per AP 4005). Submitted to the Senate to be added to the proposed Hiring Manual for 2017-18.

The following proposed changes would be reflected in the Hiring Manual. They are based on the understanding that the senate felt that the current process was too unwieldy and did not rely sufficiently/wholly rely on discipline expertise when/if a claim was elevated to the Equivalency Committee.

The following changes: rely wholly on discipline or related-discipline faculty identified by the committee to make determinations for all equivalency requests; truncates the process: where discipline faculty cannot agree on equivalency, no equivalency is awarded.

If accepted, the following would replace the current language in the draft hiring manual. Bold font indicates new language.

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Minimum qualifications in a discipline—and, by extension, equivalency—are the same whether the position is full- or part-time. Education Code and Title 5 regulations do not allow for a different standard of equivalency for part-time faculty. An applicant is either qualified to teach the full range of courses in a discipline or not, regardless of whether applying for a full-time position or a part-time position:

- 1. Education Code §87359 (a)[4] states, “No one may be hired to serve as a community college faculty ... unless the governing board determines that he or she possesses qualifications that are at least equivalent to the minimum qualifications specified” (italics added).**
- 2. Minimum qualifications are determined for disciplines, not for courses or subject areas within disciplines. Legal Opinion L 03-28 (R. Black, 2004)[5], supports the position that “a district is not authorized to establish a single course equivalency as a substitute for meeting minimum qualifications in a discipline.”**

The opportunity to seek equivalency does not guarantee the right to be granted equivalency. Rather, the equivalency process should guarantee that each candidate has the right to the application of the equivalency policies and procedures in a consistent, fair, and objective manner, with equivalency granted only if sufficient and conclusive evidence is provided by the candidate that he or she possesses qualifications at least equal to the minimum qualifications for the discipline.

To determine equivalency, the screening committee is charged with the identification of three discipline faculty from the hiring committee, or faculty from a related discipline if a sufficient number of discipline faculty are unavailable, to review all requests for equivalency. Selected faculty should be confirmed by the Academic Senate.

In the event that there is insufficient faculty expertise on the committee to review requests for equivalency, the Academic Senate shall work with the committee to identify and appoint faculty to serve in this capacity. ~~The screening committee for each vacancy is charged~~

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~~with determining equivalency.~~ **Selected faculty should arrive at unanimous consent for each equivalency request.**

~~Any candidate whose equivalency cannot be determined by the hiring committee shall be referred to the Equivalency Committee for resolution.~~

~~A standing college committee, known as the Equivalency Committee, shall be established to maintain consistency in the equivalency process throughout the institution and through time.~~

~~The Equivalency Committee shall make the determination of equivalency if the hiring committee is unable to reach unanimity regarding a candidate's qualifications.~~

~~The Equivalency Committee is distinct and separate from individual hiring committees.~~

~~The Equivalency Committee will consider candidates on a case-by-case basis maintaining thorough and accurate records of their deliberations and decisions.~~

~~It shall be the shared responsibility of the Committee and the Academic Senate to insure uniformity within and between all cases.~~

~~All deliberations and records of the Committee will be confidential.~~

No candidate shall receive an interview unless he or she meets the minimum qualifications or the equivalent of the minimum qualifications.

All questions of minimum qualifications will be resolved before any interviews will be scheduled.

Determination of Equivalency Criteria and Best Practice

Per the set of best practices adopted by the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges in its Spring 2016 paper, "Equivalency to the Minimum Qualifications," requests for granting equivalency at Solano Community College shall adhere to the following basic principles:

- 1. Equivalent to the minimum qualifications means equal to the minimum qualifications, not nearly equal;**
- 2. Applicants must provide evidence they have attained the breadth of coursework or experience equal to the general education component of an earned associate's or bachelor's degree;**
- 3. Applicants must provide evidence they have attained the skills and knowledge provided by specialized course work required for the degree listed in the Disciplines List;**
- 4. Faculty members exemplify to their students the value of an education that is both well-rounded and specialized and has consistently defined associate's degree parameters;**

5. Faculty should act as models for students by demonstrating a breadth of general education knowledge and a depth of knowledge that is discipline specific;
6. Eminence should not be used as the sole criteria for granting equivalency;
7. Provisional or conditional equivalency should not be granted.

In determining equivalency, faculty shall examine three key criteria. While a sub-set of experience or a combination of the three identified criteria may be recognized, the determination of equivalency should never mean less than the minimum qualifications as specified on the Disciplines List.

1. Examination of the candidates' course work;
2. Consideration of the candidate's work experience;
3. Consideration of the candidate's eminence in the field (i.e. where the candidate has attained recognized superiority within the identified field).

Establishing equivalency through coursework is often relatively simple, as transcripts are concrete documents that can be compared to concrete criteria. A somewhat more difficult case occurs when the name of a degree is close to that specified on the Disciplines List but the coursework is slightly different. Other, more difficult, cases occur when work experience is proposed as the equivalent of academic work. Knowledge acquired in a course could also be gained in other ways; however, the problem lies in obtaining convincing evidence to establish that an applicant has enough necessary educational preparation through an alternative means to be judged as knowledgeable as someone with the appropriate degree.

All community college faculty should exemplify the qualities of a college-educated person. To this end, Solano Community College recognizes the important distinction between general education preparation and discipline specific preparation. (For this reason, the universal requirement for all disciplines on the Disciplines List includes at least an associate degree in addition to six years of professional experience.)

Regardless of the discipline, general education preparation is vital to instruction of any subject to provide an essential cross-curricular breadth and depth. Therefore, when evaluating course work, an equivalency committee should consider whether the applicant satisfies the general education qualification for which they seek equivalency. The applicant should be expected to provide evidence of equivalent preparation that is as reliable and objective as a transcript. In this way, a candidate seeking equivalency is measured by the same yardstick as a candidate who possesses the minimum qualifications as stated in the Disciplines List.

~~The Equivalency Committee shall consist of the following representation: one (1) Student Services Manager; one (1) Academic Manager; three (3) Faculty appointed by the Senate where representative faculty serve different Schools with at least one faculty member serves a CTE discipline.~~

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Sources: Frietas, John and John Stanskas. "Executive Summary: Equivalency to the Minimum Qualifications." (October 2016) and *Equivalency to the Minimum Qualifications*. Academic Senate for California Community Colleges (October 2016).