

Navigating Through the Challenges of Minimum Qualifications and Equivalency

John Freitas, Treasurer

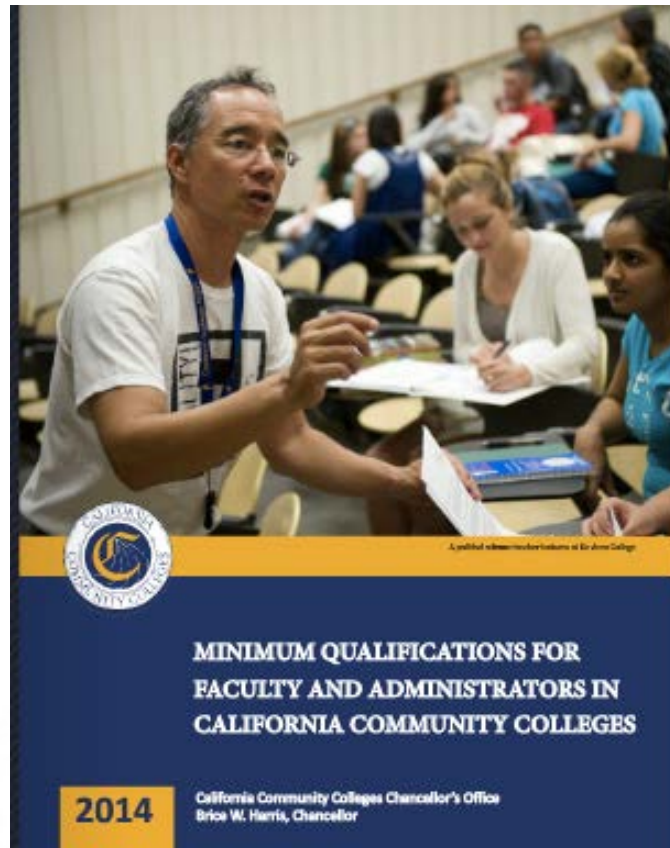
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2016 Faculty Leadership Institute
June 9-11, Riverside

What is a Discipline?

- A “discipline” is defined as a grouping of courses that share common academic or vocational preparation, which are typically defined by a degree or degrees (MFA, MA, BA, MS, etc), or specific professional preparation.
 - Not the same as local departments or subject areas.
 - Defined in the Minimum Qualifications document maintained by the BOG.
 - Example:
 - Local Department or Subject Name: Child and Family Studies
 - Official Discipline: Early Childhood Education
 - Discipline Definition in CA Education Code §87357
 - **Not the same as or related to TOP codes and names**

The Disciplines List



http://californiacommunitycolleges.cccco.edu/Portals/0/FlipBooks/2014_MQ_Handbook/

Organization of the Disciplines List

- Disciplines requiring a Master's Degree
- Disciplines where a Master's degree is not normally expected but a Bachelor's or Associate's degree is expected
- Disciplines in which a Master's, Bachelor's or Associate's Degree is not generally expected or available in that specific discipline
- Disciplines for noncredit instruction
- Other – to include Administrators, Learning Center Coordinators, Health Services Professionals, Apprenticeship Instructors, DSP&S Counselors, Work Experience Coordinators, Faculty Interns, EOPS

Revising the Disciplines List

- Reviewed and revised every two years – Proposals are submitted and received by September 30 in **even** years. Fax and email copies of proposals are not accepted – proposals being accepted now!
- Revisions can be proposed by:
 - Local senates
 - Faculty through discipline or professional organizations
- Proposals require consultation with statewide discipline organizations.
- Proposals must have a second from a senate from another district!
- Vote at spring plenary in **odd** years
- ASCCC makes recommendations to BOG
- BOG shall rely primarily on the ASCCC – **Ed Code §87357**

Reasons to Modify the Disciplines List

- Changes within the profession or discipline
- Clarification or elimination of confusion and ambiguity
- Inclusion of new degrees
- Continual use of the equivalency process to hire under a specific discipline
- Assurance of the maximum degree of flexibility for the disciple while maintaining integrity
- **Difficulty finding qualified instructors is not a reason to modify the disciplines list!**

Assigning Courses to Disciplines

- Determined by local process, but Senate has regulatory authority.
- Local process should rely on discipline faculty expertise with review and oversight by local Curriculum Committee, Senate, or both.
- Curriculum Committee is often charged with overseeing this process, but other models exist.
- Must be a faculty-driven process, regardless of committee.
- Determines the minimum qualifications necessary to teach a course.
- **Assigning courses to disciplines is not equivalency!**


Three Different Ways of Assigning Courses

1. Course assigned to a single discipline.
 - Example: ENGL 101 assigned to English. The minimum qualifications for English provides adequate preparation to teach the course content.
2. Course assigned to more than one discipline with an “or”
 - Example: ARTS 101 assigned to Art *or* Graphic Design. The minimum qualifications for either discipline provide adequate preparation to teach the course content.
3. Course assigned to more than one discipline with an “and”
 - HUMA 120 assigned to Humanities *and* Ethnic Studies. The minimum qualifications for both disciplines *together* provide adequate preparation to teach the course content.

Minimum Qualifications

- Degrees and credits generally must be from accredited institutions (**Title 5 §53406**).
- An occupational license or certificate is required in certain instances (**Title 5 §53417**).
- 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 (**Ed Code §87359/Title 5 §53430**)

Local Minimum Qualifications

- A district may establish additional qualifications which are more rigorous than the state-established MQs.
 - However, local MQs cannot be less rigorous than the state-established MQs.
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Local Equivalency Process Required

- Governing boards may grant faculty equivalency to minimum qualifications if they don't possess the required credentials stated in the Disciplines List
- Every district must have an equivalency process
- Process, criteria, and standards by which the governing board determines that faculty possess qualifications at least equal to the minimum qualifications (**Ed Code §87359**)
- “The process, as well as criteria and standards...shall be developed and agreed upon jointly by ...the [local] governing board and the [local] academic senate” and “that the governing board relies primarily upon the advice and judgment of the academic senate” (**Ed Code §87359**)


Equivalency Principles

- Equivalent to the minimum qualifications means equal to the minimum qualifications, not nearly equal.
- The applicant must provide evidence of attaining coursework or experience equal to the general education component of an earned associate's or bachelor's degree.
- The applicant must provide evidence of attaining the skills and knowledge provided by specialized course work required for a master's degree or requisite experience and coursework for disciplines that do not require a master's degree.

(Equivalence to Minimum Qualifications, adopted by the ASCCC Spring 2016)

Equivalence to Minimum Qualifications, adopted
by the ASCCC Spring 2016

“The Academic Senate believes that faculty members must exemplify to their students the value of an education that is both well-rounded and specialized.”



Equivalency Criteria

- Procedures established by agreement between local senates and boards of trustees for each district
 - In multi college districts, the criteria for equivalency must be the same at all colleges in the district.
- Discipline faculty determine criteria
- Burden of proof belongs to the applicant
- Note: Equivalency not required for possession of degrees higher than required for the discipline
 - For example, someone with a Ph.D. in English exceeds the MQs for English and is therefore qualified to teach English

Single Course Equivalency

- Ed Code and Title 5 refer to qualifications in terms of disciplines not courses or subject areas within a discipline (Ed Code **§87357**; Title 5 **§53410** and **§53430**)
- Legal Opinion L 03-28, Chancellor's Office Legal Division
 - Faculty are hired to teach a discipline, not a course

What is Equivalent to a Master's Degree?

- What is equivalent to a master's degree in history, biology, or physics?
- Is it enough to complete all of the required coursework?
- Is there an equivalent to a thesis or summative project at the end of the master's program?
- These are questions that your local equivalency process needs to address. Remember that granting equivalency to a faculty member means that their background is equivalent to the minimum qualifications listed in the Disciplines List!

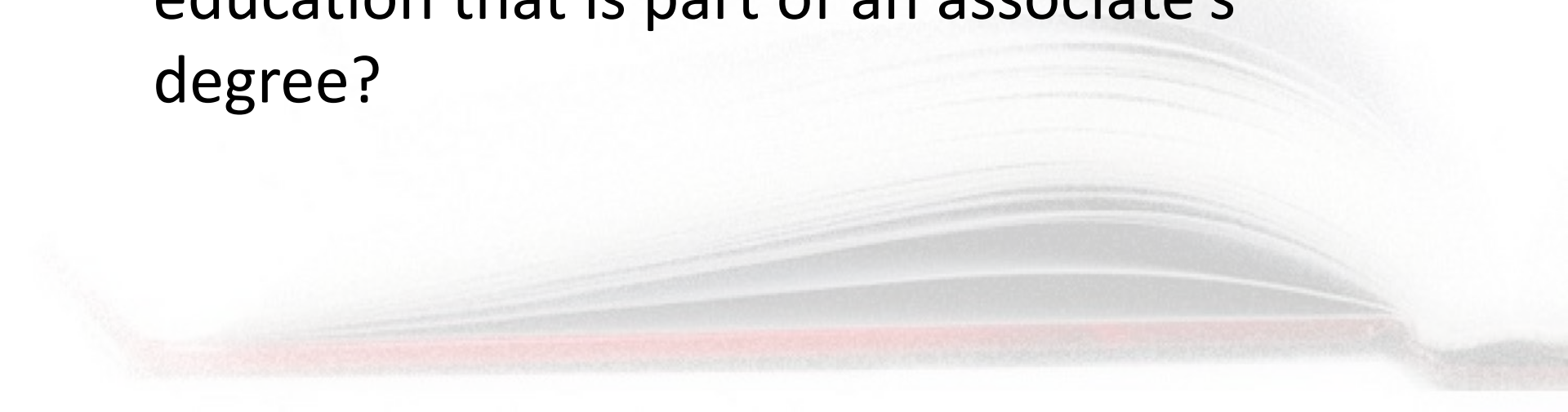
Some Disciplines Can Be Problematic

- The Disciplines List includes the discipline of Interdisciplinary Studies.
- The minimum qualifications for Interdisciplinary Studies are:
 - *Master's in the interdisciplinary area OR master's in one of the disciplines included in the interdisciplinary area and upper division or graduate coursework in at least one other constituent discipline.*
- Any time interdisciplinary studies is used, the disciplines for a particular course **MUST** be specified.
- Granting equivalency in Interdisciplinary Studies could cause problems later on!
- Alternative: assign the courses in an interdisciplinary subject to existing disciplines

Disciplines That Include Interdisciplinary Studies

- Interdisciplinary Studies
 - Physical Sciences
 - Ethnic Studies
 - Women's Studies
 - Social Sciences
 - African American Studies
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Equivalent to an Associate's Degree


- The most common equivalency requests usually come from disciplines that do not require a master's degree, but do require relevant work experience.
 - Is there an equivalent to the general education that is part of an associate's degree?
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Eminence

- Imagine that a world famous actor has come to your college and would like to teach a class. This actor has won many awards for their work in film and on stage. This actor has a bachelor's of fine arts degree in theater arts, but does not have a master's degree in any subject. Would your college hire this actor?

Minimum Qualifications for Drama/Theater Arts

Master's or Master of Fine Arts in
drama/theater arts/ performance **OR** Bachelor's
or Bachelor of Fine Arts in drama/theater arts/
performance **AND** Master's in comparative
literature, English, communication studies,
speech, literature, or humanities **OR** the
equivalent



Resources

- [*Minimum Qualifications for Faculty and Administrators in the California Community Colleges*](#), Chancellor's Office (2014)
- [*Disciplines List Revision Handbook*](#), ASCCC (2014)
- [*Equivalence to Minimum Qualifications*](#), ASCCC, adopted Spring 2016

Questions?

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Thank you for joining us!