

AP 7121 Minimum Qualifications and Equivalencies

Reference:

Education Code 87001, 87003 and 87743.2

Title 5 Sections 53400 et seq.

Minimum Qualifications for Faculty and Administrators in California Community Colleges 2016 (CCCCO publication, 2012)

Equivalence to the Minimum Qualifications (ASCCC publication, 2016)

ASCCC Curriculum Committee website: <http://www.ccccurriculum.net/about-us/> accessed August 5, 2012.

I. MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

It is the philosophy of the ASCCC and of the Academic Senate of College of the Canyons that faculty hiring procedures and guidelines provide for qualified college faculty who are experts in their subject areas, who are skilled in teaching and serving the needs of a varied student population, who can foster overall college effectiveness, and who are sensitive to and themselves represent the racial and cultural diversity of the students they serve. The Board of Trustees, represented by the administration, has the principal legal and public responsibility for ensuring an effective hiring process. The faculty, represented by the Academic Senate, has an inherent professional responsibility to ensure the quality of its faculty peers through the development and implementation of policies and procedures governing the hiring process.

The Office of Human Resources, in consultation with the Academic Senate's Minimum Qualification and Equivalencies Committee and the Department Chairs, evaluates the minimum qualifications of an applicant to teach in a discipline at COC. The determination is based on the requirements determined by the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges in consultation with the Academic Senate for the California Community Colleges (ASCCC) and published in the *Minimum Qualifications for Faculty and Administrators of California Community Colleges*, also known as the "Disciplines List." Minimum qualifications are determined for disciplines, not for courses or subject areas within disciplines, not for programs or for divisions/schools.

Disciplines are divided into 3 categories:

1. Disciplines requiring a Master's degree
2. Disciplines in which a Master's degree is not generally available
3. Disciplines in which a Master's degree is not generally available but which requires a specific Bachelor's or Associate degree.

Title 5 regulations also specify minimum qualifications for additional faculty members, including health services professionals, non-credit instructors, apprenticeship instructors, Disabled Student Programs and Services personnel, Extended Opportunity Programs and Services personnel, learning assistance and tutoring coordinators, and work experience coordinators.

The minimum qualifications for disciplines, in which a Master's degree is not generally available, are one of the following:

Minimum Qualifications and Equivalencies

1. Any Bachelor's degree and two years of professional experience directly related to the faculty member's teaching assignment. Professional experience includes both work/occupational experience and teaching experience.
2. Any Associate degree and six years of professional experience directly related to the faculty member's teaching assignment. Professional experience includes both work/occupational experience and teaching experience.

a) EQUIVALENCY TO THE MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

The faculty in each discipline determine whether they will accept equivalencies to the minimum qualifications to teach in their discipline.

Beginning in 2015 and every five years thereafter, the discipline/department faculty will review, decide, and inform the Academic Senate whether the discipline will accept equivalencies to the minimum qualifications. These decisions will be presented to the Academic Senate at the second Academic Senate meeting of the academic year.

If a discipline needs to make a change in their acceptance of equivalencies prior to the Senate's established five-year cycle due to Board Certification or other professional requirements, such as in Nursing or Paralegal Studies, the department must make a request to the MQE Committee to make a change off cycle in the acceptance of equivalencies.

b) BURDEN OF PROOF AND QUESTIONABLE MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

The burden of proof, with regard to the degree and with regard to experience, is on the applicant. Clear and thorough evidence with substantiating documentation must be presented with the application for employment. The Human Resources Office will verify minimum qualifications using the published *Minimum Qualifications for Faculty and Administrators of California Community Colleges*, also known as the "Disciplines List."

Applications with questionable minimum qualifications will be brought to the Department Chair of the discipline and to the Hiring Committee Chair for their review. If an agreement cannot be reached between the Hiring Committee Chair and the Chair of the Department, the application will be brought to the MQE Committee of the Academic Senate for a resolution during fall and spring semesters and to the MQE Committee Chair or designee during the winter and summer terms when the MQE Committee does not meet.

Information and links to past and current disciplines lists are available on the Academic Senate's website at www.canyons.edu/offices/Acad_Sen.

II. EQUIVALENCY TO A DEGREE

AB1725 provides for the hiring of faculty who do not meet minimum qualifications, provided that "the governing board determines that he or she possesses qualifications that are at least equivalent" (title 5, Sec 87359). The criteria and process for reaching this judgment must be determined jointly by the Board of Trustees of a Community College District and the Academic Senate (Title 5, Sec 53430).

Together, they are responsible for establishing and monitoring the process to assure its fairness, efficiency, and consistent adherence to maintaining standards. The agreed upon process includes reasonable procedures to ensure that the governing Board of Trustees relies primarily upon the advice and judgment of the Academic Senate to determine that each individual faculty employed possesses qualifications that are at least equivalent to the applicable minimum qualifications specified in the published *Minimum Qualifications for Faculty and Administrators of California Community Colleges*.

The process also requires that the Academic Senate be provided with an opportunity to present its views to the Board of Trustees before the governing board makes a determination; and that the written record of the decision, including the views of the Academic Senate, shall be available for review pursuant to Education Code Section 87358. Until a joint agreement is reached and approved, the faculty member will be bound by the minimum qualification.

The authority to determine equivalent qualifications allows College of the Canyons (COC) to hire the most qualified individuals. The standards of the disciplines list published in the Minimum Qualifications for Faculty and Administrators of California Community Colleges cannot be waived. The fact that a particular candidate is the best that the college can find does not affect the question of whether he or she possesses equivalent qualifications. Professional experience includes both work/occupational experience and teaching experience. Regardless of staffing needs, faculty must meet the minimum qualifications or equivalency. Care has been given in this document to establish guidelines for equivalent criteria and to draft a supplemental application page that elicits relevant information. Determination of equivalency must be done fairly and expeditiously while maintaining the standards of AB1725.

a) CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING DEGREE EQUIVALENCY

As per the paper, Equivalence to the Minimum Qualifications adopted by ASCCC in spring 1999 and revised 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. Therefore, the Academic Senate supports the following basic principles for granting equivalency:

1. Equivalent to the minimum qualifications means equal to the minimum qualifications, not nearly equal
2. The applicant for an equivalency must provide evidence of attaining coursework or experience equal to the general education component required of an Associate or Bachelor degree
3. The applicant for an equivalency must provide evidence of attaining the skills and knowledge provided by specialized course work component required for a major in an Associate, Bachelor's or Master's degree

The Academic Senate has developed procedures to meet the responsibility to determine equivalencies when an applicant for a faculty position, though lacking the exact degree or experience specified in the disciplines list, nonetheless does possess qualifications that are at least equivalent. The equivalency process is, by statute, is one upon which the Board of Trustees and the Academic Senate jointly agree.

The Human Resources Office will verify equivalencies using the established equivalencies set out in this procedure. Applications with questionable equivalencies will be brought to the Department Chair of the discipline and to the Hiring Committee Chair for their review. If agreement cannot be reached between the Hiring Committee Chair and the Chair of the Department, the application will be brought to the MQE

Committee of the Academic Senate for a resolution during fall and spring semesters and to the MQE Committee Chair or designee during the winter and summer terms when the MQE Committee does not meet.

To determine equivalencies for current full-time faculty when they request additional discipline assignments, applications will be sent to the Human Resources Department. Questionable applications will be sent to the MQE Committee for resolution or to the MQE Committee Chair or designee during the winter and summer terms when the MQE Committee does not meet.

The equivalencies established in this document will apply to new full-time and part-time faculty employees hired after June 1, 2014. Current full-time faculty employees of the district hired prior to this date are subject to prior established equivalencies. Prior part-time faculty employees will be grand-fathered under the prior equivalencies but they must meet new equivalencies starting June 1, 2014, if they have not taught in the district for three continuous years.

b) EQUIVALENCY TO A MASTER DEGREE

(Applies to disciplines in category 1 – Disciplines requiring a Master’s degree)

Revised 2016¹

In order to establish the equivalent of a Master’s degree in a discipline, applicants must show possession of at least the equivalent in level of achievement, breadth, and depth of understanding. The responsibility for supplying documentation to verify equivalency to a Master’s degree in a requested discipline lies with the applicant. Documentation must include the following:

An official transcript documenting successful completion of any Master’s degree from an accredited institution of higher learning AND official transcripts documenting successful completion of 24 semester units in the discipline at the upper division and graduate level, a minimum of which must be 12 graduate level semester units.

An applicant who does not provide conclusive evidence in regard to all sections of an option above does not possess the equivalent of the Master’s degree in question. The applicant is expected to provide evidence of equivalent preparation, and this evidence must be as reliable, objective, and thorough as a transcript. No set amount of knowledge can be said to be equivalent to any degree; equivalency depends on the nature of the knowledge. Many criteria for determining equivalency seem obvious and can be handled in a simple manner. Others are more complicated. One easy-to-address situation occurs when someone has all the appropriate courses/thesis for the relevant degree but the degree has another name. A review of the transcript might show that the coursework completed is the same as the coursework required by the Master’s program and establishes that an applicant does have the broad background and depth of experience to be judged equivalent to the content of the academic work of the Master’s degree in question.

¹ On November 10, 2016, the College of the Canyons Academic Senate voted to remove the following Equivalencies that were first established in 2013: Equivalency to a Masters Option #2 • Equivalency to a Bachelors Option #3 • Equivalency to an Associates Option #3.

c) EQUIVALENCY TO A BACHELOR DEGREE

(Applies to disciplines in categories 2 and 3 – Disciplines in which a Master’s degree is not generally available)

Revised 2016¹

In order to establish the equivalent of a Bachelor’s degree in a requested discipline, applicants must show possession of at least the equivalent in level of achievement, breadth, and depth of understanding. The responsibility for supplying documentation to verify equivalency to a Bachelor’s degree lies with the applicant. Documentation of equivalency must meet the requirements of one of the following two options:

Option 1

The applicant must submit an official transcript documenting successful completion of 120 semester units of college coursework at an accredited institution of higher learning. The transcript must include successful completion of 60 semester units of lower division and 60 semester units of upper division coursework. Also, the transcript must include successful completion of 36 semester units of general education courses as described in *Academic Procedures 7121 Minimum Qualifications and Equivalencies* and 24 discipline-specific semester units in courses for any one discipline-specific major. Credits on a CLEP, IB, or AP exam, credits by exam, and credits on a military transcript are acceptable.

Option 2

The applicant must submit an official transcript documenting successful completion of a combination of a minimum of 80 semester units of college coursework at an accredited institution of higher learning including the general education course units, as described in *Academic Procedures 7121 Minimum Qualifications and Equivalencies*, required for the Bachelor’s degree and documented and verifiable evidence of 640 hours of significant professionally sanctioned discipline-specific training through certification courses, approved apprenticeships, and licensing programs in the requested discipline. Examples of approved training programs include but are not limited to those provided by labor unions, state and national certification boards, and governmental agencies. Credits on a CLEP, IB, or AP exam, credits by exam, and credits on a military transcript are acceptable.

¹ On November 10, 2016, the College of the Canyons Academic Senate voted to remove the following Equivalencies that were first established in 2013: Equivalency to a Masters Option #2 • Equivalency to a Bachelors Option #3 • Equivalency to an Associates Option #3.

General Education for the Bachelor Degree

To meet the general education requirements for the Bachelor's degree, the applicant must include an official transcript documenting successful completion of a minimum of 36 semester units including 3 semester units in each of the following courses. A passing grade on a CLEP, IB, or AP exam are equivalent to 3 units for the related general education course. Credits by exam are acceptable.

- English Composition (Expository writing)
- Critical Thinking (e.g. Logic, Argumentation, Composition based on analytical reading)
- Oral Communications (e.g. Public Speaking, Group Communications)
- Physical Science* (e.g. Astronomy, Chemistry, Environmental Science, Geology, Oceanography, Physical Geography, Physical Science, Physics)
- Biological/Life Science* (e.g. Biology, Physical Anthropology)
- College Level Math (e.g. Mathematics above Intermediate Algebra)
- Fine/Performing Arts (e.g. Animation, Art, Dance, Design, Graphic Design, Music, Photo, Theater)
- Humanities (e.g. Foreign Language, Humanities, Literature, Philosophy) One course in either Fine/Performing Arts or Humanities
- One course in Social and/or Behavioral Science (e.g. Cultural Anthropology, Economics, History, Political Science, Psychology, Sociology)
- A second course in Social and/or Behavioral Science (e.g. Cultural Anthropology, Economics, History, Political Science, Psychology, Sociology)
- A third course in Social and/or Behavioral Science (e.g. Cultural Anthropology, Economics, History, Political Science, Psychology, Sociology)

* One of the Physical or Biological science courses above must include a laboratory.

An applicant who does not provide conclusive evidence in regard to both general education and major courses does not possess the equivalent of a Bachelor's degree. The applicant is expected to provide evidence of equivalent preparation, and this evidence must be as reliable, objective, and thorough as a transcript. The applicant must show possession of the equivalent of not only specialized knowledge of a particular major, but also of the general education component. No set amount of knowledge can be said to be equivalent to any degree; equivalency depends on the nature of the knowledge. Many criteria for determining equivalency seem obvious and can be handled in a simple manner. Others are more complicated. One easy-to-address situation occurs when someone has all the appropriate courses/thesis for a degree but the degree was never granted. A review of the transcript might show that the coursework was completed and establishes that a candidate really does have the broad background and depth of experience to be judged equivalent to the content of the academic work of a Bachelor's degree.

d) EQUIVALENCY TO AN ASSOCIATE DEGREE
(Applies to disciplines in categories 2 and 3)
Revised 2016¹

In order to establish the equivalent of an Associate degree in a discipline, applicants must show possession of at least the equivalent in level of achievement, breadth, and depth of understanding. The responsibility for supplying documentation to verify equivalency to an Associate degree in a requested discipline lies with the applicant/candidate. Documentation of equivalency must meet the requirements of one of the following options:

Option 1

The applicant must submit an official transcript documenting successful completion of 60 units of college coursework at an accredited institution of higher learning. The transcript must include 15 units of general education courses as described in *Academic Procedures 7121 Minimum Qualifications and Equivalencies*. Also, the transcript must include 18 units of discipline-specific units for any one discipline-specific major. Credits on a CLEP, IB, or AP exam, credits by exam, and credits on a military transcript are acceptable.

Option 2

The applicant must submit an official transcript documenting successful completion of a minimum of 40 units of college coursework at an accredited institution of higher learning including a minimum of 18 general education course units as described in *Academic Procedures 7121 Minimum Qualifications and Equivalencies* and required for the Associate degree and documented and verifiable evidence of 320 hours of significant professionally sanctioned discipline-specific training through certification courses, approved apprenticeships, and licensing programs in the requested discipline. Examples of approved training programs include but are not limited to those provided by labor unions, state and national certification boards, and governmental agencies. Credits on a CLEP, IB, or AP exam, credits by exam, and credits on a military transcript are acceptable.

¹ On November 10, 2016, the College of the Canyons Academic Senate voted to remove the following Equivalencies that were first established in 2013: Equivalency to a Masters Option #2 • Equivalency to a Bachelors Option #3 • Equivalency to an Associates Option #3.

General Education for the Associate Degree (Title 5 Section 55063(b))

To meet the general education requirements for the Associate degree or equivalent, the applicant must include an official transcript documenting successful completion of a minimum of 18 semester units from the course categories listed below and including a minimum of 3 semester units in each of the 5 areas. A passing grade on a CLEP, IB, or AP exam are equivalent to 3 units for the related general education course. Credits by exam are acceptable.

- Natural Science (e.g. Astronomy, Biology, Chemistry, Environmental Science, Physical Anthropology, Physical Science, Physics)
- Social Sciences (e.g. Cultural Anthropology, Economics, History, Political Science, Psychology, Sociology)
- Humanities (e.g. Art, Dance, Design, Foreign Language, Humanities, Literature, Music, Philosophy, Photography, Theater)
- English Composition (Expository writing)
- Communication and Analytical Thinking (oral communication, mathematics at minimum one level below transferable, logic, statistics, computer language and programming)

An applicant who does not provide conclusive evidence in regard to both general education and major specific courses does not possess the equivalent of the Associate degree. The applicant is expected to provide evidence of equivalent preparation, and this evidence must be as reliable, objective, and thorough as a transcript. The applicant must show possession of the equivalent of not only specialized knowledge of a particular major, but also of the general education component.

No set amount of knowledge can be said to be equivalent to any degree; equivalency depends on the nature of the knowledge. Many criteria for determining equivalency seem obvious and can be handled in a simple manner. Others are more complicated. One easy-to-address situation occurs when someone has all the appropriate courses for a degree but the degree was never granted. A review of the transcript might show that the coursework was completed and establishes that a candidate really does have the broad background and depth of experience to be judged equivalent to the content of the academic work of an Associate degree.

III. CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING EXPERIENCE

In order to establish experience, a candidate must show possession of thorough and broad skill and knowledge for each of the following:

1. Mastery of the skills of the vocation thorough enough for the specific assignment and broad enough to serve as a basis for teaching the other courses in the discipline
2. Extensive and diverse knowledge of the working environment of the vocation.

Examples of documents in support of relevant experience might include:

- Documentation of prior teaching experience in the requested discipline.
- Employer statements or other evidence validating related work experience. In the case of self-employment, continuity of experience evidenced by presenting copies of relevant tax forms (schedule C or partnership forms) over the number of requested years.

- Documentation of apprenticeships and journeyman training.
- Examples of substantial evidence of work products that show a command of the discipline and time expended on the products.

IV. EQUIVALENCY COMMITTEE OF THE ACADEMIC SENATE

a) APPLICATION TO REQUEST EQUIVALENCY

1. The *Request for Equivalency* form must be completed and attached to the application for employment together with official transcripts and/or other supporting documentation as evidence of equivalency and submitted to the Office of Human Resources. Request for Equivalency to an Associate's Degree, to a Bachelor's Degree and to a Master's Degree forms are available on the Office of Human Resources Website:
<http://www.canyons.edu/Offices/HumanResources/Pages/minimum.aspx>
2. The Human Resources Office will verify equivalencies using the established equivalencies set out in this procedure. Applications with questionable equivalencies will be brought to the Department Chair of the discipline and to the Hiring Committee Chair for their review. If agreement cannot be reached between the Hiring Committee Chair and the Chair of the Department, the application will be brought to the MQE Committee of the Academic Senate for a resolution during fall and spring semesters and to the MQE Committee Chair or designee during the winter and summer terms when the MQE Committee does not meet.

To determine equivalencies for current full-time faculty when they request additional discipline assignments, applications will be sent to the Human Resources Department. Questionable applications will be sent to the MQE Committee for resolution or to the MQE Committee Chair or designee during the winter and summer terms when the MQE Committee does not meet

3. Decisions regarding equivalencies to the minimum qualifications for a discipline when an applicant for employment submits the application will be made prior to the hiring interview. If the discipline faculty members on the Hiring Committee do not reach a unanimous decision, the equivalency is not granted.
4. If a full-time faculty member requests an additional equivalency after hiring, a *Request for Equivalency* form will be referred to the Equivalency Committee of the Academic Senate. Official transcripts and other supporting documentation must be attached to the application and submitted to the Office of Human Resources. If the Equivalency Committee does not reach a unanimous decision, the equivalency is not granted. A determination of equivalency does not guarantee a teaching assignment in the requested discipline.
5. A determination of equivalency does not guarantee a teaching assignment in the requested discipline.
6. Decisions of the Equivalency Committee will be reported to Human Resources for a possible interview and upon hire submitted to and approved by the Academic Senate in the same way that decisions of the Curriculum Committee are submitted to and approved by the Academic Senate.

7. In all equivalency procedures, the Office of Human Resources shall inform the applicant of the decision.
8. All records involved in equivalency proceedings, regardless of whether the equivalency was granted or not, shall be confidential. At the conclusion of the equivalency determination by the Equivalency Committee, the *Request for Equivalency* form and all supporting documents shall be returned to the Office of Human Resources.

b) COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

1. All faculty members serving on the committee shall be contract faculty.
2. Members of the committee will participate in annual training to take place at the first meeting of each academic year.
3. Members of the committee will review the Administrative Procedures of the Minimum Qualifications and Equivalencies (AP 7121) each spring term of the academic year.
4. All decisions of the Equivalency Committee will be made by vote of its members. A vote will not take place unless a quorum, as established by a majority of its members, is present.
5. The committee will have one faculty representative from each division/school. The Equivalency Committee may consult with discipline faculty for the requested discipline if no faculty member from the division/school where the discipline resides serves on the Equivalency Committee.
6. The committee will have two non-voting members from the Human Resources Office.
7. A full-time faculty member seeking an equivalency must abstain from deliberating on the determination of that equivalency if the faculty member making the request serves on the Equivalency Committee. In such a case, the committee must request an alternate faculty member from the division, which the faculty member represents on the committee.
8. The Committee will meet at least once a month during the fall and spring semesters, the date and time to be determined by the members of the committee.
9. A unanimous decision of the quorum (defined as 50%+1) must be reached by the Equivalency Committee or the equivalency is not granted. A member of the Committee who is not present when a *Request for Equivalency* form is reviewed forfeits his or her right to vote. Voting will take place at the scheduled monthly committee meetings, however, in the event when a timely vote must take precedence, voting may take place by email.

c) APPEAL PROCEDURE FOR CONTRACT FACULTY ONLY

If a contract faculty member applies for equivalency for an additional discipline disagrees with the decision, the applicant may appeal by submitting new written documentation or clarifications to the Equivalency Committee. This appeal must be submitted within 15 contract days after the applicant has

received notification of the committee's decision. The applicant may make an oral statement explaining this new material to the committee at its next scheduled meeting. The committee will deliberate again without the applicant present and the committee's decision shall be final. If a unanimous decision cannot be reached, the equivalency is not granted and the appeal process ends.

d) RE-APPLICATION PROCEDURE

If a current full-time or part-time faculty was denied an equivalency in the past but has after one academic year since completed additional coursework and/or possesses new supporting documentation, the applicant may re-apply for the equivalency. This is not an appeal; this is a re-application because of the time elapsed since the last equivalency decision. The Equivalency

Committee will review any and all records involved in past considerations of equivalency for that particular applicant, along with the new supporting documentation. Faculty members may not re-apply unless there is new coursework and/or new supporting documentation. The re-application process is subject to the appeal procedure.

SOURCES

1. Minimum Qualifications for Faculty and Administrators in California Community Colleges 2016 (CCCCO publication, 2016)
<http://californiacommunitycolleges.cccco.edu/Portals/0/Reports/2016-Minimum-Qualifications-Report-ADA.pdf>
2. Equivalence to the Minimum Qualifications (ASCCC publication, 2016)
<http://www.asccc.org/papers/equivalence-minimum-qualifications-1>
3. ASCCC Curriculum Committee website: <http://www.ccccurriculum.net/about-us/> accessed August 5, 2012.

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