

EQUIVALENCY

The purpose of this procedure is to provide an overview of the Sequoias Community College District (District) equivalency processes and protocols. Applicants for equivalency should refer to the District Human Resources Website for: **a flowchart of the equivalency process and equivalency application documents (including instructions).**

- **Equivalency determination steps**
- **Equivalency determination record sheet**
- **Equivalency determination check list**
- **Equivalency guidelines for academic program disciplines**
- **Equivalency guidelines for career technical education program discipline**
- **Sample applications**

References

Education Code Sections 87001, 87003, 87359, and 87743.2;
Title 5 Sections 53400 et seq.;
ACCJC Accreditation Standard 3

Minimum Qualifications

Faculty shall meet 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.

Equivalency Committee

The Equivalency Committee is an Academic Senate standing committee established to fulfill the requirements 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...."

Membership of the Equivalency Committee shall consist of the Vice President of the Academic Senate as chair and three to six full-time faculty members appointed by the Academic Senate. The committee shall:

- Be available as a resource to screening and selection committees.
- Recommend all equivalency determinations to the board.

Commented [DH1]: This will reflect the revisions the committee has made to improve the public-facing documents.

Commented [DH2]: League language

- Keep careful records of all equivalency determinations.
- Periodically review this procedure and recommend necessary changes to the Academic Senate and governing board.
- In general, ensure that the equivalency process works well and meets the requirements of the law.

Definition of Equivalency

Equivalency means equal to the minimum qualification for a particular discipline as listed in the Minimum Qualifications for Faculty and Administrators in the California Community Colleges (the “Discipline List”).

Formal Equivalency Process

The equivalency process is adjunct to the hiring process.

1. Initiating Equivalency Process

As soon as the level one hiring committee has decided that they have a candidate who (a) they wish to interview, (b) does not meet minimum qualifications for the position, but (c) in their view possesses equivalent qualifications as specified above, then the hiring committee chair shall immediately **contact submit an Equivalency Record Form signed by three members of the hiring committee to** Human Resources to initiate a formal review by the Equivalency Committee.

Commented [DH3]: This better describes the formal process

2. Responsibilities

This section identifies the duties and responsibilities of all parties **to of** equivalency requests.

a. Applicant

- Applicants are responsible for providing all required forms and documentation in support of their equivalency claim.
- It is the applicant’s responsibility to make it clear to the equivalency committee how **s/he has they have** the equivalent education and/or experience/expertise.

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b. Level One Hiring Committee

- Hiring committees will decide whether candidates may apply for equivalency under eminence.
- Hiring committees may require more, but not less, than the minimum described in section **3.a.i 3-1** or **3.a.ii 3-2** for equivalence.
- For a candidate claiming eminence, the three faculty who sign the document supporting the request must also provide a paragraph or more of written justification in support of the candidate’s claim of eminence.

- iv. Hiring committees will provide Human Resources with a complete set of paperwork in support of the requested equivalency.
- v. **A representative (or representatives) of the Level One committee may address the Equivalency Committee at its meeting considering the request. Up to 10 minutes will be allotted and time can be extended by the Equivalency Committee if needed for additional information or Q&A.**
- vi. **An EEO representative is encouraged to sit in on the equivalency Committee deliberations**

Commented [DH5]: Reflecting our new procedure

c. Human Resources

- i. Human Resources will notify the Vice President of Academic Senate as soon as an equivalency request is received.
- ii. Human Resources will provide the Vice President of Academic Senate with a complete set of all paperwork in support of the equivalency application.
- iii. Human Resources will forward approved equivalencies to the Board of Trustees at the completion of the process.

d. Equivalency Committee

- i. The Vice President of Academic Senate will promptly convene the committee.
- ii. The committee will make and record a determination on the Record Sheet and return all paperwork to Human Resources with a final recommendation to be forwarded (if approved) to the Board of Trustees.
- iii. The Vice President of Academic Senate will keep a record of all determinations.

3. Evaluation of Equivalency for Faculty

In evaluating the qualifications of applicants, the Equivalency Committee reviews transcripts and other supporting documents to determine equivalency by meeting the following criteria:

a. Disciplines Requiring a Master's Degree

In disciplines normally requiring an M.A./M.S. one of the following must be satisfied:

- ~~i. B.A./B.S. plus 36 semester units or more (to be determined by the level-one hiring committee) of graduate level coursework in the specific discipline from an accredited institution~~

- i. **Courses taken for a candidate's degree must be shown to be equivalent to those from an accredited Master's degree program for the discipline hiring**
OR
- ii. B.A./B.S. plus licensure in the discipline from an accredited institution or entity
OR
- iii. If a candidate is claiming eminence in the field or discipline, they must provide the committee with proof of such. Proof is defined as work experience and/or related accomplishments considered exemplary by noted/renowned experts in that field. These criteria are reflected in a questionnaire that must be completed by all candidates requesting equivalency based on eminence. Eminence claims must include evidence of meeting the general education requirements of a Bachelor's degree.

b. Disciplines Not Requiring a Master's Degree

- i. **Disciplines Requiring a Specific Bachelor's or Associate Degree and Professional Experience**

For disciplines in the minimum qualifications list that require a bachelor's or associate degree in a specific area, both the following must be satisfied:

1. **Courses taken for a candidate's degree must be shown to be equivalent to an accredited BA/BS or AA/AS program in the discipline hiring.**
2. **The professional experience required (two years/bachelor's degree or six years/associate) must be directly related to the faculty member's teaching assignment.**
OR
3. **If a candidate is claiming equivalency based on eminence, life, and/or work experience(s), they must provide the committee with proof of such. Proof is defined as conclusive, objective evidence directly related to the discipline applied for. Eminence (and equivalency) claims must include evidence of meeting the general education requirements of an Associate's degree.**

Commented [DH6]: Reflects changes in the minimum qualifications handbook

- ii. **Disciplines ~~not requiring a Master's degree~~ Requiring Any Degree and Professional Experience**

In disciplines **in the minimum qualifications list** where ~~the master's~~ **a specific** degree is not generally expected or available (~~see The Discipline's List~~), one of the following must be satisfied:

Commented [DH7]: Changes in the minimum qualifications handbook

1. Course work from an accredited institution/years of experience equivalent to either an AA/AS degree and six years of experience, or a BA/BS degree and two years of experience **directly related to the faculty member's teaching assignment (unless otherwise noted in the minimum qualifications list).**

Commented [DH8]: Minimum quals handbook

OR

2. If a candidate is claiming equivalency based on eminence, life, and/or work experience(s), they must provide the committee with proof of such. Proof is defined as conclusive, objective evidence. These criteria are reflected in the Equivalency **for Career Technical Education Program Disciplines Requiring Any Degree and Professional Experience Not Requiring a Master's Degree documents attachment.** Eminence (and equivalency) claims must include evidence of meeting the general education requirements of an Associate's degree.

Commented [DH9]: This change reflects the actual name of the document

Commented [DH10]: The packet is not attached to the AP, it resides on the HR website

c. Other Considerations

- i. The District does not accept equivalency granted by another institution.
- ii. Foreign degree equivalency will be determined by credentials evaluation service. A list of accepted services may be obtained from the office of Human Resources. The expense of this evaluation is the responsibility of the applicant.

4. Determination of Equivalency

- a. **During the normal working period of a semester,** the Equivalency Committee shall **act expeditiously meet to consider an equivalency request within two weeks of receiving it from HR. If additional time is needed for a vote, the next meeting should be scheduled within two weeks of the first meeting. so as to accommodate the hiring process,**
- b. **If the two week periods would present an undue hardship in the hiring process, the chair will attempt to find more expeditious dates.**
- c. **Requests received over summer and winter breaks will be handled as quickly as it is possible to assemble a quorum.**
- d. **The Committee Chair will** and direct its decision to the Office of Human Resources. A determination that an applicant's qualifications are equivalent to the minimum qualifications for a discipline shall not be construed as an indication that the applicant will be hired.

Commented [DH11]: These procedures attempt to clarify the timeline.

Commented [DH12]: With further outreach and training, the committee hopes this will prove unnecessary

e. **Applicants granted equivalency in a discipline retain that specific equivalency locally in perpetuity even if not hired.**

5. **Special Circumstances**

In case of an emergency or unforeseen special circumstance in which the full hiring process cannot be completed in a timely manner and the candidate is an equivalency claimant, the following shall apply:

- a. The hiring committee chair in consultation with the area dean will make an honest evaluation of the candidate's claim.
- b. If **a** hiring committee chair and area dean feel the candidate meets the criteria for equivalency, they will immediately notify the Dean of Human Resources or **his/her their** designee and begin the equivalency process.
- c. The Dean of Human Resources will immediately notify the Vice President of Academic Senate that an emergency equivalency situation exists. If the Vice President cannot be reached, the President of the Academic Senate will be notified, and if the president is unavailable, the chair of Committee A will be notified. The person receiving the equivalency request will then contact the equivalency committee and forward all relevant documentation via email and request a timely determination.
- d. All parties understand that in order to follow the requirements of the Education Code, assure the validity of student transcripts, and maintain state apportionment, the District can only hire applicants whose equivalency has been established through this procedure.

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6. **Denied Equivalency Requests**

If a dispute arises over a denied request for equivalency, the dispute must be submitted to Human Resources which will investigate the issues and determine how to proceed.

Applicants who are denied may revise and resubmit equivalency applications at any time.

Commented [DH14]: Disputes from any party about any aspect of the hiring process must go through HR to protect confidentiality of applicants and of committee members. Equivalency Committee work fits under this umbrella, so this AP directs disputes to HR for reconciliation.

7. ~~Reconsideration of Denied Equivalency Request~~

~~In cases where a level one hiring committee wishes the Equivalency Committee to reconsider a denied equivalency request, they may do so by contacting the Vice President of the Academic Senate and requesting a reconsideration meeting be convened with the Equivalency Committee. Protocols for a request for a reconsideration meeting are as follows:~~

- ~~• A request for a reconsideration meeting must be supported with new documentation and/or evidence that the level one hiring committee believes, if considered, would result in a different decision by the Equivalency~~

Committee. Any request for a reconsideration meeting that does not meet this threshold will not be accepted.

6.1.a. New documentation may include, but is not limited to, transcripts and/or a published paper that were not included in the original equivalency request.

6.1.b. New evidence may also include, but is not limited to, verifiable irregularities in the equivalency process.

- If a request for a reconsideration meeting is approved by the Vice President of Academic Senate, the reconsideration meeting will take place in a timely manner.
- One representative of the level one hiring committee will be invited to present the new documentation and/or evidence to the Equivalency Committee at the reconsideration meeting.
- The level one hiring committee representative will be afforded no more than 30 minutes to present new documentation and/or evidence. At no time during the reconsideration meeting shall the level one hiring committee representative attempt to revisit documentation included in the original denied equivalency application.
- After this meeting, the Equivalency Committee will meet in a closed session, not to exceed 60 minutes, to reconsider the equivalency request. All equivalency determinations from reconsideration meetings are final.

7. Faculty Service Areas

Faculty service areas shall be established after negotiation and consultation as required by law with the appropriate faculty representatives.

- a. When a faculty member wishes to apply for a new Faculty Service Area, but does not meet the minimum qualifications (see The Discipline's List), yet believes they meet equivalency, the Formal Equivalency Process shall apply except that the process shall begin when the faculty member submits a request to Human

Commented [DH15]: There is concern that this language is not legal. I can find no other college with similar language in its equivalency process.

Commented [DH16R15]: After further discussion, the committee has decided this should be removed for the following reasons:

1. The equivalency process is adjunct to the hiring process, and no other candidate in the hiring process gets a second chance like this.
2. The reconsideration would mean the committee would have to release confidential information about the committee's deliberations.
3. The committee will reach out through HR in any situation where it feels it needs more information (this is in the committee bylaws) so as to give candidates a fair chance.
4. Denied applicants can always reapply, essentially giving them a second chance to better present themselves.

Commented [DH17R15]: See Previous Comment