

Equivalence to Minimum Qualifications

I Glendale Community College Philosophy and Practices

AB1725 provides for the hiring of faculty who do not meet the precise letter of the minimum qualifications, provided that “the governing board determines that he or she possesses qualifications that are at least equivalent” (Sec 87359). The criteria and process for reaching this judgment must be determined jointly by the Board of Trustees of Glendale Community College District and the Academic Senate (Title 5, Sec 53430). Together, they will be responsible for establishing and monitoring the process to assure its fairness, efficiency, and consistent adherence to maintaining standards.

The authority to determine equivalent qualifications does not allow GCC to hire less-qualified individuals. The standards of the GCC Disciplines List 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. The issue is not how badly an instructor is needed, but whether this person does have qualifications as good as those who do meet the letter of the minimum requirement. 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.

It is the philosophy of the Glendale Community College District that faculty hiring procedures and guidelines be established that provide for a college faculty of qualified people 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 adult population 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 local 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 GCC Disciplines List states the minimum qualifications for all GCC faculty positions (whether full-time or part-time) in each discipline that is recognized by the Board of Governors in consultation with the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges. (The GCC list differs from the statewide list in that a few disciplines at GCC have higher local qualifications.) Minimum qualifications are determined for disciplines, not for courses or subject areas within disciplines, not for programs or for divisions. The first GCC Equivalency Policy was presented to the board in June, 1990. This updated version provides clarification and is intended to make the policy easier to understand and to implement.

One part of the process needed to fulfill these responsibilities is a procedure for determining when an applicant for a faculty position, though lacking the exact degree or experience specified in the GCC Disciplines List, nonetheless does possess qualifications that are at least equivalent. The equivalency process is, by statute, one upon which the local governing board and the local academic senate must jointly agree. If the Board of Trustees is not in agreement with an equivalency recommendation, the Equivalency Committee of the Senate shall meet with the Board so that agreement can be reached.

II Criteria for Equivalency and the Burden of Proof to establish the Equivalence to a Required Degree or to establish the Equivalence to Required Experience

Equivalency committees evaluate minimum qualifications that are based on the disciplines that have been determined by the Board of Governors in consultation with the Academic Senate of the California Community Colleges. The Academic Senate of Glendale Community College, in consultation with the appropriate divisions, may choose to raise the statewide minimum qualifications for a discipline to create a local qualification. **Where GCC standards are higher than the state minimum qualifications, GCC local qualifications shall prevail.** A current GCC Disciplines List is available in each Division Chair's office as well as in the Office of Human Resources.

Some disciplines at GCC, such as Computer Science, have a degree component and an experience component on the GCC Disciplines List. The burden of proof, with regard to the degree and with regard to the experience, is on the applicant. Clear and thorough evidence with substantiating documentation must be presented in order for the committee to make a decision.

A. The Equivalent of a Required Degree

In order to establish the EQUIVALENT OF A REQUIRED DEGREE, candidates must show possession of at least the equivalent in level of achievement, breadth, and depth of understanding for each of the following:

- The GENERAL EDUCATION REQUIRED FOR THAT DEGREE
- The COURSE WORK REQUIRED FOR THAT DEGREE MAJOR

A candidate who does not provide conclusive evidence in regard to both of these does not possess the equivalent of the degree in question.

The candidate is expected to provide evidence of equivalent preparation, and this evidence must be as reliable, objective, and thorough as a transcript. The candidate must show possession of the equivalent of not only specialized knowledge of a particular discipline, 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 the relevant degree but the degree has another name. A review of the transcript might show that the coursework is the same and the degree equivalent.

A more difficult case comes when experience or independent learning is proposed as the equivalent of academic work. The problem lies in obtaining evidence to establish 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 the degree in question.

Examples of formal academic equivalents to the degree might include:

For a discipline requiring an MA/MS or BA/BS,

- the degree with a different name with equivalent coursework.

- total completion of coursework and academic requirements (thesis and/or exams) for the degree with the actual awarding of the diploma in the near future.

For a discipline requiring an MA/MS,

- a Masters in the Teaching of the Discipline, including 18 semester units of upper division and/or graduate work in the discipline, and a BA/BS in the discipline.

For a discipline requiring a BA/BS,

- at least 120 semester units including general education and 30 units in the discipline, at least 18 of which are upper division or graduate.

For a discipline requiring an AA,

- at least 60 semester units including courses common to a general education component (toward a Certificate of Completion, for example).

Examples of non-formal academic equivalents to the degree might include:

- substantial work experience IF that experience involved research, organization, or other work products AND if that experience included the quantity and diversity necessary to round out the character of the experience as equivalent to degree work
- substantial academic experience and accomplishments such as teaching upper division or graduate level courses together with scholarly publications or books
- substantial artistic experience and/or accomplishments such as performances, shows, exhibitions, or compositions which show a command of the major or occupation in question.
- clear and verifiable eminence in the field establishing that the candidate is recognized as eminent outside of the geographical region AND that eminence is based on experience and activities in this field clearly beyond those that are usual.

Examples of two equivalencies for the required degree might be:

- for Dance, any BA/BS AND four or more years of training with recognized dance educators AND two or more years of professional performance experience AND two or more years of teaching experience at the community college level or higher.
- for Foreign Language where the applicant is a native speaker, any MS/MA AND fluency in the language AND one of the following: two or more years experience working directly with the language (as a translator, interpreter, or publisher, for example) OR two or more years teaching at the community college level or higher.

One of the following must be true of the college and university degrees and credits submitted for employment, placement, or advancement:

- The institutions are accredited by one of the regional agencies recognized by the Council on Post-Secondary Accreditation and the United States Secretary of Education.
- The degrees and credits were earned at institutions recognized worldwide and are clearly equivalent to corresponding programs in the United States.
- The degrees and credits have been evaluated by the Academic and Professional International Evaluations Inc in Los Alamitos, CA, or another

reputable service, including those abroad, which prepare comparable evaluations of professional degrees.

B. The Equivalent of Required Experience

In order to establish the EQUIVALENT OF REQUIRED EXPERIENCE, candidates must show possession of thorough and broad skill and knowledge for each of the following:

- 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
- EXTENSIVE AND DIVERSE KNOWLEDGE OF THE WORKING ENVIRONMENT of the vocation.

A candidate who does not provide conclusive evidence in regard to both of these, does not possess the equivalent of the experience in question.

Examples of documents in support of relevant experience might include:

- substantial evidence of work products that show a command of the major.
- 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.

III Equivalency Committee

Applications for equivalency shall go through the Regular Procedure or, in rare cases, the Emergency Procedure and the committee composition for both are described here. The Emergency Procedure is used if the first day of class is within one month from the equivalency application date.

A. Procedure

1. Questions of equivalency will first be referred to the Equivalency Committee of the Division. If a unanimous decision cannot be reached, then the matter is referred to the Equivalency Committee of the GCC Academic Senate. If the Equivalency Committee of the Senate cannot reach a unanimous decision, the equivalency is not granted.
2. If, however, the Equivalency Committee of the Division does grant the equivalency, it shall be reviewed by the 1st Vice President of the GCC Academic Senate. If the 1st Vice President of the GCC Academic Senate does not agree with the Equivalence Committee of the Division, then the matter is referred to the Equivalency Committee of the GCC Academic Senate for final resolution. If a unanimous decision cannot be reached by the Equivalency Committee of the Senate, the equivalency is not granted.
3. In the case when the Equivalency Committee of the Division disagrees with the decision of the Equivalency Committee of the Senate not to grant the equivalency, it may be appealed to the full Senate.

4. Emergency Equivalency Procedure

If the first day of teaching for a semester or an intersession is within four weeks away and an equivalency must be determined, the Chair of the appropriate division may meet with the Vice President of the Academic Senate, or his/her designee, and examine the application for equivalency. If a unanimous decision cannot be reached, the equivalency is not granted.

B. Committee Membership

All faculty members serving on any equivalency committee shall be tenured faculty.

1. The **Equivalency Committee of the Division** shall consist of three members:
 - The Division Chair of the division housing the discipline in question (in future references, this division shall be called the “appropriate” division), or his/her designee, and
 - Two other faculty members selected by the Division Chair from among:
 - a current or a past senator from the Chair’s division or
 - an instructor from either the discipline or a closely-related discipline or
 - a senator on the hiring committee or
 - any other senator
 - One of the three members must serve as the Guild representative.
 - Besides the three members, the Division should specify two alternates from among the above choices to assure coverage.

Individuals seeking an equivalency may not serve on committees deliberating on that equivalency. If a division chair is applying for the equivalency, the Academic Senate Executive will provide a chair for the equivalency committee. Unanimous decisions of the committee are indicated on the Minimum Qualifications Worksheet.

Because decisions on equivalency must often be made quickly, the members of the committee must be prepared to review the materials and make the decision within five working days after the completed application is received by the Division Chair. If a unanimous decision cannot be reached by the Equivalency Committee of the Division, then the equivalency is not granted unless the division chair chooses to refer the matter to the Equivalency Committee of the Academic Senate.

2. The **Equivalency Committee of the GCC Academic Senate** shall consist of three members:
 - The 1st Vice President of the Senate who is spokesperson for the GCC Disciplines List,
Or his/her designee and
 - Two senators or past senators, one of whom is from the appropriate division.
 - Whenever possible, one of the three members should be from the discipline under consideration.
 - One of the three must serve as the representative of the Guild.

This committee shall meet whenever necessary as described in the following sections, indicating its unanimous decision on the Minimum Qualifications Worksheet.

Because decisions on equivalency must often be made quickly, the members of the committee must be prepared to review the materials and make the decision within five working days after the completed application is received by the 1st Vice President of the GCC Academic Senate. If a unanimous decision cannot be reached, the equivalency is not granted.

IV Procedure for Applying for Equivalency in a New Discipline

Decisions regarding equivalencies to the minimum qualifications for a discipline will be made prior to the hiring of the instructor in that discipline. A determination of equivalency does NOT guarantee a teaching assignment.

A. Full-time – New Hires

Applicants for full-time or contract employment will indicate one of the following with a check mark on the application form for academic employment: possesses Credential, or possesses Minimum Qualifications, or possesses an Equivalency. If “Equivalency” is checked, the **Form for Evaluating Equivalencies** is completed and attached to the application by the applicant, together with official transcripts, if applicable, or other supporting documentation. The Office of Human Resources then attaches a **Minimum Qualifications Worksheet** to any application claiming possession of equivalent qualifications.

In the case of an application for a full-time position based on equivalency, either the Equivalency Committee of the Division or the Equivalency Committee of the Senate will make a decision as explained in Part III above, and the decision will be submitted to the Office of Human Resources, which will then notify the candidate.

B. Full-time – Returning Faculty Part-time – New or Returning Faculty

All returning faculty (full-time or part-time) must complete and submit the following to the Office of Human Resources:

- the Supplemental Application Form for Evaluating Equivalencies
- official transcripts, if applicable, or other supporting documentation

All new part-time faculty must complete and submit the following to the Office of Human Resources:

- the GCC Academic Application
- the Supplemental Application Form for Evaluating Equivalencies
- official transcripts, if applicable, or other supporting documentation

The Office of Human Resources then attaches a **Minimum Qualifications Worksheet** to the submitted documentation and this packet is sent to the appropriate Division Chair. The equivalency decision is made following the procedures in Section III.

V The Appeal Procedure and the Re-Application Procedure

If an applicant for equivalency disagrees with the decision, the applicant may appeal by submitting the new written documentation or clarifications to the committee that rendered the decision (either the Equivalency Committee of the Division or the Equivalency Committee of the

Senate) or, in the case of an Emergency Procedure, to the Equivalency Committee of the Division. This appeal must be submitted within five working 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. Then 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.

If an applicant had been denied an equivalency in the past but has since completed 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. Any and all records involved in past considerations of equivalency for that particular applicant, along with the new supporting documentation, shall then be reviewed by the same equivalency committee that first considered the matter (either the Equivalency Committee of the Division or the Equivalency Committee of the Senate). To ensure consistency, the committee should also consult past records of any equivalency proceedings in the pertinent discipline; these records are in each division chair's office (see section VI). The re-application process is subject to the appeal procedure described in the preceding paragraph.

In all equivalency procedures, Human Resources shall inform the applicant of the decision. Inquiries regarding either committee's decisions may be directed to the appropriate division chair, who has records of committee decisions.

VI Equivalency Records

All records involved in equivalency proceedings, regardless of whether the equivalency was granted or not, shall be confidential. At the conclusion of the equivalency procedures by either equivalency committee, all original documents shall be sent to the Office of Human Resources, while the chair of the committee making the final decision (Division Chair or the 1st Vice President of the Academic Senate) retains copies both for the division equivalency records and for the records of the 1st Vice President of the Academic Senate.

VII Review and Revision

This equivalency policy and its procedures are subject to review and revision every three years, or more frequently if requested by either the Board of Trustees or the GCC Academic Senate. Changes in this policy require the joint agreement of the Academic Senate and the Governing Board.

GLENDALE COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT
MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS WORKSHEET

Applicant's Name _____ Social Security Number _____

This form is being completed by (check one):

- The Equivalency Committee of the Division
- The Equivalency Committee of the Academic Senate
- Chair and Senate VP/Designee in an Emergency Procedure

The decision of the committee is that the applicant (check one):

- possesses the Minimum Qualifications in the Discipline of _____.
- does NOT possess the Minimum Qualifications in the Discipline of _____ for the following reasons:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

This decision is made in accordance with the GCC Policy on the Equivalence to Minimum Qualifications and is signed by the members of either the Equivalency Committee of the Academic Senate or the Equivalency Committee of the Division or the Chair and Senate Representative using the Emergency Procedure, as specified in the policy.

Vice President, Academic Senate OR Division Chair/designee _____ Date

Senator/Past Senator _____ Date

Senator/Past Senator OR Instructor _____ Date

Original to: Human Resources
Copies to: Division Chair
1st Vice President, Academic Senate