

# MSJC Academic Senate Equivalency Committee Charge and Membership

The Academic Senate shall form an Equivalency Committee to review requests and make recommendations for granting equivalency, in accordance with the following guidelines:

- The Academic Senate will designate a full-time faculty member to chair the Committee. The designated committee chair serves as the direct point of contact between Human Resources, committee members and Senate leadership.
- The Committee will consist of a total of nine members who will be regular contract faculty and preferably, tenured faculty appointed by the Academic Senate.
- Committee members should be representative of all campuses and all five of the Pathway Programs with one member each from Arts, Communication, and Design; Business, Technology, and Entrepreneurship; Health and Wellness; People, Culture, and Public Service; and Science, Math, and Engineering. In addition to these five respective Pathway representatives, the committee shall include 4 At-Large positions. The Chair will work with the AS appointment secretary to ensure the greatest diversity possible within committee members such that the committee mirrors the diverse campus population and surrounding community with regard to race, ethnicity, culture, gender, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, religion, spirituality, disability, age, national origin, immigration status, and language.
- Faculty Committee members will be appointed through the appointment secretary of the Academic Senate.
- The Committee Chair and Academic Senate President or designee will host a committee orientation at the start of each academic year to review regulations, processes, and procedures.
- A member of the Human Resources Department may serve on the Committee as a nonvoting, resource person.
- The Curriculum Committee Chair will serve as a nonvoting, resource person to the committee when requested.
- The Academic Senate President will serve as a nonvoting, resource person to the committee.
- Quorum is established when at least 50% plus one of the committee's voting members are present. Decisions are based on a simple majority of opinion during the vote. Each vote will be documented on the appropriate HR forms and include the signatures of all voting members of the committee.
- For decisions addressing eminence, a majority +1 vote is required.
- After committee approval, the petitions will go to the Board of Trustees for final approval. Applicants should not be hired until BOT approval is granted.
- Equivalency approvals, upheld by the Board, shall have a duration consistent with the applicant's employment with MSJC or for a duration of 4 years after the last semester teaching in that discipline (in which the equivalency applies), barring any significant changes in the state minimum qualifications for that particular discipline.

- Equivalency approvals, upheld by the Board, that have resulted in full time employment and tenure shall be considered permanent.
- Equivalency requests will not be processed during off contract periods.

The Academic Senate Equivalency Committee shall:

- Conduct meetings in a face-to-face setting (via linked rooms between campuses, and limiting electronic voting/meetings to emergency items only). As a committee of the MSJC Academic Senate, the Equivalency Committee will follow Brown Act regulations regarding open and public meetings with agendas posted 72 hours prior to meetings. At the end of each semester, the committee will formulate a calendar of monthly meetings during contractual periods for the following academic semester with noted deadlines for receipt of equivalency review requests to meet agenda deadlines. If the committee does not receive equivalency review requests that meet the agenda deadline and does not have other committee business to address, the meeting may be cancelled.
- Ensure that the equivalency process meets all legal requirements and adheres to the standards and requirements of the board of governors' minimum qualification regulations (Title 5, Sections 53400-53430) as set forth within the disciplines lists and guidelines in the *Minimum Qualifications for Faculty and Administrators in Community Colleges* handbook. The most recent edition of the handbook should be posted on the Equivalency web page for committee and faculty reference. The Career Technical Education Faculty Minimum Qualifications Toolkit should also be posted on the Equivalency web page for committee and faculty reference.
- Serve as a resource to Screening/Interviewing Committees regarding equivalency determinations.
- Recommend all equivalency determinations to the Executive Academic Senate and the President/Superintendent for Board approval, as needed. The Committee chair will submit a report to the Academic Senate once a year, upon request.
- Provide accurate records of all equivalency determinations to Human Resources after determinations of applications are made at the monthly, scheduled meetings. Applications submitted during off contract periods will be held until the next scheduled equivalency committee meeting.
- Periodically review this Equivalency Procedure and recommend necessary changes to the Academic Senate and Board of Trustees.

**Summary of Equivalency Process Performed by Human Resources:**

1. HR reviews application and notes petition for Equivalency
2. HR saves a digital copy of the applicant's entire petition paperwork (application, petition, transcripts, letters of recommendation & resume)
3. Utilizing the posted Department Chair list, determine applicable Dept. Chair(s) (drawing from different campuses as possible). If two Department Chairs are not available, HR will contact the Executive Senate President for additional name(s), except in instances where a single applicable district-wide department chair exists, in which case, the sole chair suffices.

4. HR sends Department Chairs, or the sole district-wide Chair, an email that includes the applicant's petition, the MSJC Equivalency policy, and the Internal Approval: Discipline Review Form to complete; Chairs, or the sole district-wide Department Chair, have one week to respond to the request. If Department Chairs are split in decision, both approve, or do not respond within one week (or the sole district-wide Department Chair approves or does not respond), the application automatically goes on the Equivalency Committee's next available agenda and Chairs or the single-district-wide Chair may attend to speak to the particular application. Once two Department Chairs or alternately the single district-wide Chair (or other designee) send in the completed form, HR creates a revised packet for the applicant that includes this form.
5. HR uploads petitions and department chair approvals (or the single district-wide Chair approval) to the digital repository (i.e. Canvas shell or the equivalent) as they are processed, up until the public posting of the agenda per Brown Act (approximately 72 hours prior).
6. Once the Equivalency Committee approves a petition, the packet summary is placed on the next Board of Trustees agenda if there is an intent to hire. If the BOT approves, the applicant is notified. This is not to be confused with hiring; it is approval that an equivalency to the minimum qualifications has been granted, therefore the applicant can move forward in applying for employment. If the equivalency petition is approved, the applicant is then referred to the department hiring manager(s). If the petition is denied, the applicant receives an email notification.

**General Notes:**

- HR strives to process applications almost daily but can sometimes delay full assessment of applications for longer periods from when the application was submitted. This occurs during peak periods and during weeks when the District observes a Holiday and/or modified schedule.
- The Internal Approval and Equivalency Decision forms are scanned by HR and uploaded into NEOED to attach to the applicant's profile. The forms are not viewable by the applicant.
- The Equivalency committee maintains a digital repository that is accessible to all members, which houses resources and becomes the location where petitions are housed.
- If the applicable Department Chairs or single district-wide department Chair does not respond within one week, the application will automatically go onto the next committee agenda for committee determination without Department chair input. Chairs or the single district-wide department Chair may attend the scheduled meetings to address the application.
- Petitions that have been denied by both Department Chairs, or alternately have been denied by the single district-wide department Chair, are not forwarded to the Equivalency Committee and removed from the digital repository mentioned above.
- If Department Chair opinions are split, the request is forwarded to Equivalency Committee
- If Department Chair document(s) note an invalid reason for their denial/approval of petition, the request is forwarded to the Equivalency Committee
- Applicants who send a petition for the same discipline which was previously denied will not be considered unless: 1) the applicant has additional education/transcripts for the Equivalency Committee to consider, 2) there is a change in Dept. Chair representative(s), 3) the pertinent area of the Handbook changes, necessitating another review, or 4) additional experiences or professional milestones are earned that fall under Eminence.

# Mt. San Jacinto College District Petition for Equivalence

This form must be completed by each applicant who does not meet the minimum qualifications specified in the job announcement but who is requesting employment consideration based on an assertion of equivalence. To clarify: “Equivalency to the minimum qualifications means equal to the minimum qualifications, not *nearly* equal” (Chancellor’s office: Minimum Qualifications Handbook).

It is the responsibility of the applicant to supply all evidence and documentation for the claim of equivalency at the time of application. This form must be attached to the standard MSJC application (online job board) as required and specified in the job posting announcement.

**Applicant Name:**

**Position/Discipline:**

**List all credentials that you hold and attach them to your application:**

**List all degrees that you hold and attach them to your application:**

**Indicate the basis on which you are applying for equivalence:**

- Degree Equivalence: possession of a degree(s) with similar content to those listed in the job announcement (derived from the Chancellor’s Handbook: “Minimum Qualifications for Faculty and Administrators in California Community Colleges” available online); transcripts are required.
- Professional Achievement/Eminence Equivalence: outstanding professional achievement, professional experience or substantial training in the field specified in the job announcement. Preparation, experience, and ability must be equivalent to those expected from a candidate who meets minimum qualifications. This type of equivalence is uncommon; therefore, specific requirements are given later in this document.

**Please provide a brief description of why you believe you meet the criteria for equivalency:**

# MSJC Internal Approval Policy for Equivalency Discipline Review

All applications must be distributed by HR and should be approved by at least two (when possible) MSJC full-time, tenured or tenure-track faculty members from the discipline recommending the petitioner for equivalency before being submitted to the Equivalency Committee. Approval by MSJC discipline specific faculty members will be carefully considered in the determination that the qualifications of the application satisfy the equivalency requirements of the discipline.

If there are no full-time, tenured or tenure-track faculty members within the discipline, a full-time, tenured or tenure-track faculty member from a related discipline (as defined in the current Minimum Qualifications for Faculty and Administrators in California Community Colleges handbook) may sign the application. For disciplines with only non-tenured faculty members, the signing tenured faculty member from a related discipline (again, as defined in the current Minimum Qualifications for Faculty and Administrators in California Community College Handbook) must consult with the non-tenured faculty prior to signing. Final determination for equivalency rests primarily with the Equivalency committee, guided by discipline faculty approval, as long as discipline faculty follows the mandates of this procedure, state education code, and Title 5. Let approval/denial of the applicant's petition be guided by this: **“Equivalency to the minimum qualifications means equal to the minimum qualifications, not *nearly equal*”** (Chancellor’s office).

**Applicant’s Name:**

**MSJC Department/Discipline:**

**Action of MSJC Department members:            Grant            Deny**

**Briefly explain the basis for action:**

**Name, Signature and Date of each MSJC faculty member involved in this action:**

By including my signature below, I acknowledge that I have participated in the equivalency process and support the decision made as a member of the MSJC department named above.

| Name | Signature | Date |
|------|-----------|------|
|------|-----------|------|

# MSJC Decision Form for Equivalency Academic Senate Equivalency Committee Review

**Equivalency discipline:**

**Applicant's Name:**

**Meeting Time and Location:**

By including my signature below I acknowledge that I have participated in the equivalency process and support the decision made as a member of the Academic Senate Equivalency Committee:

**Name**

**Signature**

**Date**

**Action Taken:**

**Grant Deny Defer to Executive Academic Senate**

**Summary of meeting and rationale for decision:**

*Return original, signed form(s) to Human Resources. Submitted by the chair of the committee, on behalf of the Academic Senate.*

Approved by the Executive Academic Senate Fall 2024

# MSJC Academic Senate Equivalency Committee Procedures

The MSJC equivalency procedure is followed whenever a candidate for a full time or part time faculty position does not meet the minimum qualifications set forth in the Disciplines List and the candidate requests consideration based upon equivalency. According to Education Code (Section 87359) equivalency means, “possessing qualifications that are at least equivalent to the state-adopted minimum qualifications for a particular discipline.”

Faculty must meet the Minimum Qualifications for the discipline of the faculty member’s assignment. 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 (e.g., MFA, MA, BA, AS, etc.), or specific professional preparation. Discipline is from the perspective of faculty preparation; it is *not the same* as local departments or subject areas. The Disciplines List (linked above) specifies the minimum qualifications for each discipline. Instructional faculty must meet the MQs of the disciplines to which courses are assigned. (This content comes from the ASCCC PowerPoint created for the Faculty Leadership Institute June of 2021). The Career Technical Education Faculty Minimum Qualifications Toolkit is used as a valuable resource when determining the equivalency for Career Education faculty.

## Equivalency Committee

The Academic Senate Equivalency Committee fulfills the requirement 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.” In order to ensure that the Board of Trustees relies primarily on the advice and judgment of the Academic Senate, the Academic Senate Equivalency Committee shall:

- Be available as a resource regarding equivalency determinations.
- Recommend all equivalency determinations.
- Further clarify the criteria to be used for determining equivalency.
- Ensure that careful records are kept of all equivalency determinations.
- Periodically review this procedure and recommend necessary changes to the Academic Senate and Board of Trustees.
- In general, ensure that the equivalency process works well and meets the requirements of the relevant Education Code sections dealing with equivalency petitions.

The MSJC Academic Senate Equivalency committee shall follow the guiding principles for granting equivalency as set by the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges, including:

- Equivalent to the minimum qualifications means at least equal to the minimum qualifications, not nearly equal. Criteria should never be less than equal to the qualifications specified on the Disciplines List. Equivalencies cannot be granted provisionally.

- The applicant must establish his or her claim for equivalency.
- According to Education Code 87355, credentials issued before the minimum qualifications were established are still valid.

### **Operating Procedures for Determination of Equivalencies:**

The following procedure is to be used to determine when an applicant for a faculty position, although lacking the exact degree or experience specified in the Disciplines List of the Board of Governors that establishes the minimum qualifications for hire, nonetheless does possess qualifications that are at least equivalent to those required by the Disciplines List. The procedure is intended to ensure a fair and objective process for determining when an applicant has the equivalent qualifications; not to grant waivers for lack of the required qualifications.

- All faculty position announcements will state the required qualifications as specified by the Disciplines List, including the possibility of meeting the equivalent of the required degree or experience.
- District applications for faculty positions will ask applicants to state whether they meet the minimum qualifications of the Disciplines List or whether they believe they meet the equivalent. Those claiming equivalency will then be asked to state their reasons and to present evidence on the Application for Equivalency form. The applicant will be responsible to supply all evidence and documentation for the claim of equivalency at the time of application.
- Human Resources will initially screen all applicants. Those applicants who require an equivalency determination will be forwarded to the MSJC discipline faculty first and then the Academic Senate's Equivalency Committee.
- All applications should be signed by at least two MSJC full-time, tenured or tenure-track faculty members from the discipline recommending the petitioner for equivalency before the equivalency petition is submitted to the Equivalency Committee. In situations where two full-time, tenure or tenure-track faculty do not exist, then a full-time tenured or tenure-track faculty member from a related discipline or an Associate faculty member (from the discipline in question) who has been with the department for a minimum of 5 years may be consulted for recommendations. Approval by MSJC discipline specific faculty members will be carefully considered in the determination that the qualifications of the application satisfy the equivalency requirements of the discipline.
- If there are no full-time, tenured or tenure-track faculty members within the discipline, a faculty member from a related discipline (as defined in the current Minimum Qualifications for Faculty and Administrators in California Community Colleges handbook) may sign the application. For disciplines with only non-tenured faculty members, the signing tenured faculty member from the related discipline must consult with the non-tenured faculty prior to signing. Final determination for equivalency rests primarily with the equivalency committee, guided by discipline faculty as long as discipline faculty follows the mandates of this procedure, state education code, and Title 5. The Board of Trustees must issue final approval.
- At the discretion of the Equivalency Committee, additional information, supporting materials, or additional justification or support from faculty within the discipline may be requested during the review period.
- In case of a dispute between the Equivalency committee and the discipline faculty, the Executive Academic Senate will serve as the arbitrating body.

- The Equivalency Committee will review and make decisions on applications once a month at the scheduled meetings, assuming the application is submitted during the certificated contract year. Equivalency applications will not be reviewed during off contract periods.

If an application is denied, the Equivalency Committee has three (3) working days from the day the decision is made to provide the Office of Human Resources with formal notification (suitable for inclusion in the personnel file). The Chairperson of the Equivalency Committee will either prepare the formal notification or delegate the responsibility to a committee member. The formal notification should include the reasons why the application was denied and will bear the signatures of the voting members of the equivalency committee.

The Academic Senate Equivalency Committee or designees shall submit its recommendation and evaluation concerning equivalency and non-equivalency to Human Resources. Only applicants who are found to meet equivalency may be selected for an interview.

Hard copies of all forms and documents for equivalency must be maintained in the appropriate personnel file for future reference as needed. The equivalency will be in force so long as the minimum qualifications remain unchanged, or if grandfather clauses are included in the new regulations. The approved equivalency will only be recognized by Mt. San Jacinto College.

The Equivalency Committee shall have sole responsibility to recommend forms to the Academic

Senate for petitioning for equivalency. These forms shall be published and made readily available. The Academic Senate shall modify these forms as deemed necessary and may request suggestions or recommendations for such modification from the Equivalency Committee.

### **Determination of Equivalencies:**

In short, the equivalency guidelines are articulated in the California Community Chancellor's office handbook: "Minimum Qualifications for Faculty and Administrators in California Community Colleges". Disciplines are divided into three areas, each with their own guidelines. (This document is located on the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office website & is updated regularly.)

- Disciplines in which a Master's degree is a minimum qualification.
- Disciplines in which a Master's degree is not generally available but which requires a specific bachelor's or associate degree
- Disciplines in which a Master's degree is not generally available. The minimum qualifications for disciplines on this list are any Bachelor's degree or higher and two years of professional experience, or any Associate degree and six years of professional experience. The professional experience required must reflect the faculty member's ability to teach the full range of courses in the applicable discipline.
  - The Career Technical Education Faculty Minimum Qualifications Toolkit may be used as a valued resource in this area.

## **Masters List Disciplines**

The Academic Senate for California Community Colleges states that, “The minimum qualifications for a service as a community college faculty member teaching any credit course or as a counselor or librarian, shall be satisfied by meeting any one of the following requirements:

1. Possession of a master’s degree, or equivalent foreign degree, in the discipline of the faculty member’s assignment.
2. Possession of a master’s degree, or equivalent foreign degree, in a discipline reasonably related to the faculty member’s assignment and possession of a bachelor’s degree, or equivalent foreign degree, in the discipline of the faculty member’s assignment.” Title 5 confirms that in addition to a master’s degree in the specific discipline, a master’s degree in a “reasonably related” discipline can satisfy the minimum qualifications requirement.
3. The discipline faculty, working with the Academic Senate’s Equivalency committee, are responsible to determine the equivalent academic degree or graduate level course work that fulfills the minimum qualifications for the Masters List Disciplines using the Disciplines List.
4. Professional Experience/Eminence—explained later in this document.

## **Non-Masters List Disciplines**

There are two categories of non-masters disciplines as noted above under “Determination of Equivalencies.”

For disciplines on both Non-Masters Lists, establishing the equivalent of required experience includes possession of thorough and broad knowledge for each of the following:

- a) Mastery of the skills of the vocation are broad enough to serve as a basis for teaching other courses in the discipline; and
- b) Extensive and diverse knowledge of the working environment of the vocation.

A candidate must present conclusive evidence in regard to both (a) and (b) above to be considered to possess the equivalent of the experience in question.

For disciplines on the Non-Masters List, discipline faculty, working with the Academic Senate’s Equivalency committee, is responsible to determine if prospective candidates meet equivalency standards for degrees and/or experience.

## EMINENCE

Candidates may qualify by virtue of eminence. We do not expect this to be a common occurrence, but an allowance for such a situation ought to be considered, given the value such an eminent hire would bring to MSJC. Eminence and experience are not synonymous, although a candidate with eminence will clearly have significant experience in the field.

In terms of education, eminence determinations will-adhere to the minimum degree qualification criteria set forth in the most recent Minimum Qualifications Handbook; however, for fields where eminence is not necessarily determined by a degree, an intimate understanding of how the higher education or college system operates is needed. For decisions addressing eminence, a majority +1 vote is required.

In determining eminence, the committee may call upon the department chair or field experts to provide industry or discipline standards. Determination of eminence should be based upon a conviction that the candidate, if considered by recognized authorities in the field, would have an eminent reputation and would be judged superior. Moreover, evidence must be provided that the candidate possesses the ability to clearly articulate the subject matter in a modern, culturally relevant collegiate context.

### Evidence

The applicant must provide documentation supporting the status of eminence. The college may also seek other avenues to verify the eminence of the candidate. The areas listed below, from which the applicant can support their eminence, draw from discipline experts and recognizable forms of disciplinary acclaim to denote excellence. Above and beyond this, evidence from entities recognized within the discipline that also focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion are encouraged.

This eminence should include appropriate state, national and/or international associations, trade unions, guilds or communities comprised of experts, or alternately, organizations whose mission and vision prioritize diverse voices and whose members are themselves acknowledged or renowned in the specific field, and who can attest, in writing, to the prominence and significance of the applicant.

To meet the eminence requirement, the applicant must submit four of the following forms of documentation evidencing an extraordinary ability worthy of distinction, such as (and not in any particular order of importance):

- a) Publications in peer-reviewed journals or texts
- b) Conference presentations, symposiums, panel discussions and the like
- c) Proof of authorship of original works of art, choreography, and/or direction of produced performance pieces in venues/galleries/screenings/festivals of note
- d) References from former employers, professional colleagues and other experts in the field, relating to the individual's recognized expertise, position of prominence within the specific field or cultural salience
- e) Written advisory opinions from a peer group, national or international organization representing the field.

- f) Evidence of a major, nationally or internationally recognized award. These awards should be of the type recognizing uncommon achievement in and advancement of a particular field of endeavor.
- g) Substantial portfolio including reviews, articles and promotions from established, recognized press organizations and media outlets.
- h) List of other professional accomplishments not noted above

(The content above was developed after reviewing a myriad of other CCC equivalency policies regarding eminence.)