

# 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.
- In addition to the Chair, four members of the Committee will be regular contract faculty and preferably, tenured faculty (2 SJC/Banning/San Geronio, 2 MVC/Temecula) appointed by the Academic Senate.
- Faculty Committee members will be appointed to two-year terms through the appointment secretary of the Academic Senate. Every effort will be made to stagger terms and committee members may serve consecutive terms.
- 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 an alternate to the committee as needed. As an alternate committee member, the Academic Senate President has the same access to equivalency related materials as regular members and should be included on all committee correspondences and determinations.
- A quorum of three of the five members must vote on all equivalency recommendations. Each vote will be documented on the appropriate HR forms and include the signatures of all voting members of the committee.
- Equivalency requests will not be processed during off contract periods.

The Academic Senate Equivalency Committee shall:

- Conduct meetings in a face to face setting (linked rooms between campuses, and limit 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. Each spring, the committee will formulate a calendar of monthly meetings during contractual periods for the following academic year 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 do 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.
- 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. The Committee chair will submit a report to the Academic Senate once a year.
- 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 applicant's entire petition paperwork (application, petition, transcripts, letters of recommendation & resume)
3. Utilizing the posted Department Chair list, determine applicable Dept. Chair's (different campus whenever possible). If two Department Chairs are not available, HR will contact the Executive Senate President for additional name(s).
4. HR sends Department Chairs an email that includes the applicant's petition, the MSJC Equivalency policy, and the Internal Approval: Discipline Review Form to complete; Chairs have one week to respond to the request. If Department Chairs do not respond within one week, the application automatically goes on the Equivalency Committee's next available agenda and chairs may attend to speak to the particular application. Once two Department Chairs or other designee send in the completed form, HR creates a revised packet for the applicant that includes this form.
5. HR sends a detailed email to Equivalency Committee with the applicant's petition and Department Chair forms
6. Once the Equivalency Committee reaches a decision, the applicant is notified. If petition is approved, the applicant is 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 up to 14-days from when the application was submitted. This occurs during peak periods and during weeks when the District observes a Holiday/modified schedule. On average, we receive 10 Academic applications each day.
- The Internal Approval and Equivalency Decision forms are scanned by HR and uploaded into NEOGOV to attach to the applicant's profile. The forms are not viewable by applicant.
- If a 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 may attend the scheduled meetings to address the application.
- Petitions that have been denied by both Department Chairs are not forwarded to the Equivalency Committee
- If Department Chair opinions are split, the request is forwarded to Equivalency Committee
- If Department Chair document(s) note an invalid reason for denial 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 us to consider, or 2) there is a change in Dept. Chair representative(s)

# 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).

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, transcripts required.
- Professional Achievement 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.

**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 signed by at least two MSJC **full-time**, tenured **or tenure-track** faculty members from the discipline recommending the petitioner for equivalency before being submitted to the Equivalency Committee. Signature by several of the tenured or non-tenured faculty within the discipline is recommended. 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 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.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Signature</b>	<b>Date</b>
-------------	------------------	-------------

# **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:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Signature</b>	<b>Date</b>
-------------	------------------	-------------

**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.***

# 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.”

## 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 must 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. Signature by several of the tenured or non-tenured full-time faculty within the discipline is recommended. 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 must consult with the non-tenured faculty prior to signing. Final determination for equivalency rests primarily with discipline faculty as long as discipline faculty follows the mandates of this procedure, state education code, and Title 5.
- 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:**

### **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:

- a) Possession of a master’s degree, or equivalent foreign degree, in the discipline of the faculty member’s assignment.
- b) 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.

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. If a discipline is noted on the Masters List, all applicants must have a master’s degree in at least a “reasonably related” discipline to receive equivalency.

### **Non-Masters List Disciplines**

There are two categories of non-masters disciplines. There are disciplines in which a Master’s degree is not generally available but which require a specific bachelor’s degree or associate’s degree. The minimum qualifications for disciplines on this list are specifically named bachelor’s degree(s) and two years of experience or specifically named associate degree(s) and six years of experience.

The second list includes disciplines in which a master’s degree is not generally available. The minimum qualifications for this list are any bachelor’s degree and two years of experience, or any associate degree and six years of experience.

For disciplines on the Non-Masters List, 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 thorough enough for the proposed specific assignment and 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.