

# Assigning Courses to Disciplines

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# I. INTRODUCTION

# What is Course Discipline Assignment?

The process of determining the minimum academic or professional preparation necessary to teach the content of each course in the college curriculum.

- All courses are “assigned” to one or more of the Disciplines listed in the document “Minimum Qualifications for Faculty and Administrators in California Community Colleges.”
- Under the authority of local academic senates, often delegated to the Curriculum Committee.

# What is a Discipline?

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 (MFA, MA, BA, MS, etc), or specific professional preparation.

- Not the same as local departments or subject areas.
- Defined in the Minimum Qualifications document maintained by the BOG.
- Example:
  - Local Department or Subject Name: Child and Family Studies
  - Official Discipline: Early Childhood Education
- Discipline Definition in CA Education Code §87357
- Not the same as or related to TOP codes and names.

# The Regulations

Title 5§ 53200: (b) “Academic senate,” ... as the representative of the faculty, is to make recommendations to the administration of a college and to the governing board of a district with respect to academic and professional matters. For purposes of this Subchapter, reference to the term “academic senate” also constitutes reference to “faculty council” or “faculty senate.”

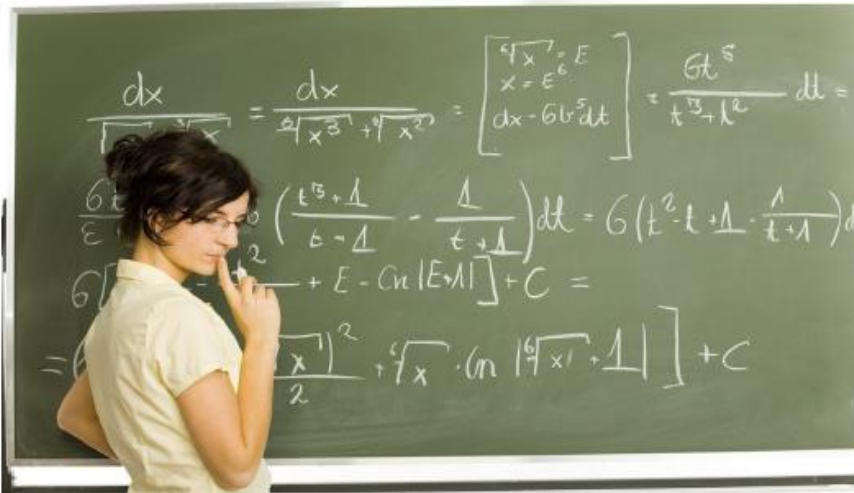
(c) “Academic and professional matters” means the following policy development and implementation matters:

“(1) curriculum, including establishing prerequisites and **placing courses within disciplines...**”

# Role of the Curriculum Committee

- Varies from College to College
- *IF* given authority for Course Discipline Assignment:
  - Develop process for review and assignment
  - Maintain consistent standards for assigning courses
  - Review and place every course into appropriate discipline(s)
  - Adjudicate disputes.
  - Approve or recommend CDA to Senate or Board.

## II. MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS



## Minimum Qualifications for Faculty and Administrators in California Community Colleges

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Leadership, Advocacy, and Support"*



# What is the “Disciplines List?”

- Colloquial name for Min Quals handbook.
- Developed with passage of AB 1725, replacing older credential system.
- List of disciplines and minimum qualifications for instructors, counselors, and librarians.
- Incorporated by reference into Title 5 regulations
- Disciplines and minimum qualifications for each under the authority of BOG who must rely primarily on the ASCCC.

# Two Primary Functions

## **Prescriptive Function:**

- Prescriptive when it is used for faculty hiring. To be hired in discipline, a faculty member *MUST* possess the minimum qualifications or be locally determined to possess the equivalent.

## **Permissive Function:**

- Permissive in that local senates and curriculum committees *MAY* assign individual courses to the discipline(s) that provide(s) the requisite experience to teach the content of their local courses.

# The “Disciplines List”

Organized into the following categories:

- Disciplines requiring a master’s degree.
- Disciplines in which a master’s degree is not generally expected or available but which requires a specific bachelor’s or associate degree.
- Disciplines in which a master’s degree is not generally expected or available.

# III. PROCESS FOR COURSE DISCIPLINE ASSIGNMENT

# Who Assigns the Disciplines?

- Determined by local process, but Senate has regulatory authority.
- Local process should rely on discipline faculty expertise with review and oversight by local Curriculum Committee, Senate, or both.
- Curriculum Committee often charged with overseeing this process, but other models exist.
- Faculty-driven process, regardless of committee.

# Principles of Assignment

- The guiding principle is course content, not personnel issues or local department politics.
- Courses should be placed in a discipline on the body of knowledge necessary to teach the course.
- Regardless of the local situation, discipline faculty need to be involved in assignment of courses to disciplines.
- Remember: Not all programs or department titles are disciplines.

# Three Ways to Assign Course

1. Course assigned to a single discipline.
  - Example: ENGL 101 assigned to English. The minimum qualifications for English provides adequate preparation to teach the course content.
2. Course assigned to more than one discipline with an “or” (cross listed)
  - Example: ARTS 101 assigned to Art *or* Graphic Design. The minimum qualifications for either discipline provide adequate preparation to teach the course content.
3. Course assigned to more than one discipline with an “and” (interdisciplinary)
  - HUMA 120 assigned to Humanities *and* Ethnic Studies. The minimum qualifications for both disciplines *together* provide adequate preparation to teach the course content.

# Courses Assigned to Multiple Disciplines:

- *Do not* need to be listed on more than one course outline of record (COR) or be listed in the catalog under multiple subject codes. For Example:
  - ARTS 101 is cross-listed on the COR under Art and Graphic Design. The college only maintains one COR for ARTS 101. The course is listed in the catalog ONLY as ARTS 101.
- *May* be “double-coded”, i.e. recorded on two or more CORs and listed in the catalog under each subject code. For example:
  - Social Psychology is recorded on two separate CORs, one as PSYC 120, one as SOCI 120. It is listed in the catalog under both subject codes. Double-coded courses should have identical CORs.



# Impact on Teaching Assignments:

## Single Discipline:

- Faculty who meet minimum qualifications or the locally-determined equivalent for that discipline are eligible to teach the course.

## More than one discipline with an “or”:

- Faculty who meet minimum qualifications or the locally-determined equivalent in any of the listed disciplines are eligible to teach the course.

## More than one discipline with an “and”:

- Faculty who meet minimum qualifications or the locally-determined equivalent for ALL of the listed disciplines are eligible to teach the course.

# Scenarios

To which discipline(s) would you assign the following courses?

- Survey of Art History: Renaissance to Contemporary
- Economic History of the United States
- Social Psychology
- Political Philosophy
- Introduction to Photoshop
- Introduction to Cultural Theory

## IV. EQUIVALENCY TO MIN QUALS

# Equivalency to Min Quals

A district may hire a person who

- “possesses qualifications that are at least equivalent to the [state] minimum qualifications.”

Provided that :

- “The process, as well as criteria and standards...shall be developed and agreed upon jointly by ...the [local] governing board and the [local] academic senate.”

**Title 5 § 53430**

# Equivalency to Min Quals

- Equivalencies are established locally.
- Districts establish local processes in determining equivalency-  
Academic Senate and Board of Trustees.
- Discipline faculty determine criteria.
- Human resources helps applicants realize that the burden of  
proof belongs to the applicant.
- Board of trustees relies primarily on the recommendations of  
the faculty.
- The local Board of Trustees must make note of the criteria  
when employing the individual (Ed Code §87359)

# Single Course Equivalency?

- Ed Code and Title 5 refer to qualifications in terms of Disciplines not courses or subject areas within a Discipline  
(Ed Code § 87357; Title 5 § 53410 and § 53430)
- Legal Opinion L 03-28, Chancellor's Office Legal Division
- Faculty are hired to teach a discipline, not a course

# What about Eminence?

- Eminence is not specified in current law
- Not prohibited
- Academic Senate Position

*“eminence may no longer be used as the sole criterion to qualify faculty when evaluating minimum qualifications during the faculty hiring process” (Resolution 10.01 S09)*

# Local Minimum Qualifications

- A district may establish additional qualifications which are more rigorous than the state-established MQs.
- However, local MQs cannot be less rigorous than the state-established MQs.



## V. UPDATING THE DISCIPLINES LIST

# Updating the “List”

Preparation and Maintenance assigned to the Academic Senate (Ed Code §87357)

- Reviewed and revised every two years.
- Revisions proposed by local senates.
- Revisions proposed by faculty through recognized discipline or professional organization.
- Votes on discipline changes occur at Plenary Sessions.
- Academic Senate makes recommendations to BOG.

# Updating the “List”

Proposed changes should have a basis of one of the following:

- Changes within the profession or discipline
- Clarification or elimination of confusion and ambiguity
- Inclusion of new degrees
- Continual use of the equivalency process to hire under a specific discipline
- Assurance of the maximum degree of flexibility for the discipline while maintaining integrity
- Other reason, as fully detailed and justified in the proposal

## VI. CONCLUSION

# Tips for Curriculum Chairs

- Establish local policy and processes that include clearly delegated responsibilities.
- Be prepared for disputes and have established guidelines for conflict resolution.
- Train your committee.
- Pay attention to development of new disciplines and revisions to existing ones.
- Record disciplines on COR or have another single, official repository for this information.
- Work closely with administration and Senate.

Questions?