



# ASSIGNING COURSES TO A DISCIPLINE

# The college is required to ensure that qualified people are teaching, counseling, and filling other faculty roles.

- We ensure this, in large part, by establishing minimum qualifications on a course (or for a non-teaching role)
- Minimum qualifications (MQs) are listed in the Minimum Qualifications for Faculty and Administrators in California Community Colleges Handbook
  - AKA *“The disciplines list”*

# Minimum Qualifications Handbook

- A joint product of the Academic Senate and the Educational Services and Support division of the state Chancellor's Office
- Adopted by the Board of Governors
- Reviewed annually
- Updated as needed
- Lists specific minimum qualifications for each discipline in the handbook

# Discipline Defined

- In this context, a discipline is a grouping of courses that share common academic or vocational preparation, which are typically defined by a degree or degrees (MFA, MA, BA, AS, etc.), or specific professional preparation
- Disciplines are assigned to define the faculty preparation necessary in order to be able to teach a certain course
- Disciplines are not the same as our local prefixes (subjects), departments, TOP codes, or FSAs. For example:
  - Local Department or Program Name: Child and Family Studies
  - Local Subject Prefix: CFS
  - Official Discipline in MQ handbook: Early Childhood Education

# Assigning a Course to a Discipline

- Is the responsibility of the local academic senate
- Senates typically delegate this work to their local curriculum committee
- The curriculum committee relies on faculty with the necessary subject matter knowledge to advise them on assignments
- This work is in the first item of the 10+1

# 10+1

As noted in Title 5, the Academic Senate's primary function is to make recommendations in academic and professional matters which are:

- Curriculum including establishing prerequisites and placing courses within disciplines
- Degree and certificate requirements
- Grading policies
- Educational program development
- Standards or policies regarding student preparation and success
- District and college governance structures, as related to faculty roles
- Faculty roles and involvement in accreditation processes, including self-study and annual reports
- Policies for faculty professional development activities
- Processes for program review
- Processes for institutional planning and budget development
- Other academic and professional matters as are mutually agreed upon between the governing board and the academic senate

# Overview of Assigning Courses

- Every credit and noncredit course must be assigned to a discipline from the handbook, but community service courses do not
- Districts must first adopt disciplines before courses can be assigned to them
- Districts may establish minimum qualifications that are more rigorous than what is in the handbook, but not less
- Districts can hire someone with qualifications different from but at least equivalent to the assigned discipline through a local equivalency process
- Districts maintain a local disciplines list that is accessible and shows how local prefixes map to the MQs in the state handbook.

# Details of Assigning a Discipline

- Most courses are assigned to a single discipline
  - Example: ENGL 101 assigned to English. The minimum qualifications for English provides adequate preparation to teach the course content.
- Some courses need more than one discipline.
  - Option 1 with an “or.” Example: ARTS 101 assigned to Art or Graphic Design. The minimum qualifications for any listed discipline provide adequate preparation.
  - Option 2 with an “and.” Example: HUMA 120 assigned to Humanities and Ethnic Studies. The minimum qualifications of both together provide adequate preparation.
- In some cases, courses may be best served with the Interdisciplinary Studies designation.\*
- ASCCC has established that the best practice for documenting the assigned discipline is to list it on the course outline.



# HOW THIS MANIFESTS IN PERALTA



# We Use Our Prefixes as De Facto Disciplines

- Courses can't be assigned to more than one discipline
  - Instead we use cross-listing as a work around for assigning to either of two disciplines (the “or”)
  - We can't assign a course to two required disciplines (the “and”)
- There is no established way to designate a different MQ within a prefix
- To add new disciplines, we are forced to add a new prefix
  - This results in unnecessary and potentially confusing prefixes  
Two recent examples: DANCE & DANCEFOLK (Folk Dance) and MUSIC & MUSIC-CM (Commercial Music)

# Local Disciplines List Not Available

- It can be difficult to nearly impossible to check how local prefixes map to MQs in the state handbook
  - Limited people in Academic Affairs and HR seem to be the only one with access to Peralta's list
  - It can be difficult to get a response in a timely manner or with sufficient information
- Our Academic Senate is not reviewing and updating the list
  - We don't know if the list is accurate and up to date
  - Non-faculty are taking the primary role in managing this list/CIPD is approving disciplines
  - Misalignments and missing information are causing problems:  
COPED 450, EDT, HUSV, LRNRE

# My Proposal

Work with the senate to:

- Establish separate designations for prefix and discipline assignment on course outlines
- Utilize existing prefixes as much as possible and only add new prefixes when necessary
  - An example of how might this look: maintain the ART prefix, but specify minimum qualifications for each course as needed such as Art, Art History, Commercial Art, Ceramics, etc.
  - Eliminate some prefixes with one or only a few courses, such as PHYSC (Physical Science) and HLTED (Health Education). These could be moved under BIOL but assigned to Earth Science and Health for example.
- Updates or revisions to Peralta's discipline list should be managed by the Academic Senate, including adoption of new disciplines

# \*Min Quals for Interdisciplinary Studies

- Master's in the interdisciplinary area OR master's in one of the disciplines included in the interdisciplinary area and upper division or graduate coursework in at least one other constituent discipline.
- Any time interdisciplinary studies is used, the disciplines for a particular course MUST be specified.
- Example: A college with Environmental Science courses
  - *Environmental Science is a recognized field with a master's degree, but it is not in the MQ handbook*
  - *The college could try to assign existing areas such as chemistry and geology. These instructors may or may not know about Environmental Science AND the college wouldn't be able to hire an instructor with an Environmental Sciences degree.*
  - *If courses are assigned to Environmental Science via Interdisciplinary Studies then a person with master's degree in Environmental Science is qualified to teach all of the Environmental Science courses offered by the college and students get a subject matter expert for these courses*
  - *The curriculum committee also needs to assign the Environmental Science courses to constituent disciplines from the Disciplines List.*
  - *A person with a master's degree in one of the constituent disciplines who has completed the requisite upper division or graduate coursework in another one of the constituent disciplines will be qualified to teach the Environmental Sciences courses.*