

Special Qualification Process for Education-only Job Classes

Background

When the state's current job classes were implemented, specialized job classes were consolidated into broad generic classes such as General Professional. Job classes, such as Student Services Specialist, Public Information Specialist, College/University Counselor, Human Resources Specialist, and Administrative Program Specialist, to name a few, emphasized education and experience in specific professional fields. After consolidation into the broad General Professional job class, for example, it became necessary to tailor minimum qualifications (usually a bachelor's degree and experience) to the specific work assignment.

The job market at the time of this consolidation was fluid; jobs were plentiful. As a result, the transition to broad classes was relatively inconsequential. The current business environment, however, is very different. Jobs are not plentiful, and unemployment levels are on the rise. The budget situation in our state is impacting us in many ways, not the least of which is layoffs. Broad job classes do not lend themselves to the processing of retention rights (layoffs).

The majority of broad job classes allow for specification of minimum qualifications that include a combination of education and/or experience focused on a specific work assignment. There are, however, a few job classes for which only education is required. These minimum requirements, usually a bachelor's degree, are largely used for entry-level professional positions. The basis for this requirement is that, given certain basic educational background, the probationary period of employment will provide a kind of internship in preparation for higher level assignments. While the agency may stipulate degree fields for specific assignments, oftentimes, the degree fields for different General Professional I assignments will overlap.

The problem that has been created is that these job classes are extremely vulnerable in layoff situations. Positions that under the former system were classified as Student Services Intern, Public Information Intern, Human Resources Intern, and College/University Intern, for example, are now all under the broad class of General Professional I. Retention rights under the former system would not allow a Student Services Intern to "bump" a Public Information Intern for example. Yet with the broad job classes there is no recognition of the professional focus of individual General Professional I positions and no mechanism for preventing a General Professional I in the student services area to displace a General Professional I in the publications area.

This process is designed to serve as a mechanism to recognize the professional focus of individual positions where the minimum qualifications prevent specification of an experience requirement and to recognize the investment in training and resources by campus departments for employees in those job classes where there is a certification and/or other specific skill set/competency associated with a typical training period. While we cannot approve special qualifications that exceed the minimum requirements set forth by the Department of Personnel and Administration, approving a certification or competency level after a typical training period does not exceed the minimum qualifications. Rather, it recognizes the training time and resources invested for an employee to achieve the required certification or competency.

It should be noted that special qualifications may be requested for positions in any job class. Requests must meet the criteria for bona fide occupational qualification in order to be approved as a special qualification. Employment Services is responsible for making the decision as to whether a request meets the criteria for special qualification approval. For special qualification requests apart from this process, please submit page 9 of the Position Description Questionnaire (PDQ).

Process

The requesting department must submit the Special Qualification Request form to Employment Services. Accompanying documentation may be attached to the form as needed. The criteria outlined below must be met for a special qualification to be approved for job classes where the minimum requirements are education-only (no experiential component). Examples of these job classes include, but are not limited to, General Professional I, Arts Professional II, and Media Specialist III.

- Consideration and approval will only be granted after a minimum training period of at least six months. A “typical” training period is defined as six months and most skill sets, competencies, and/or certifications cannot be achieved in less time.
- Requirement must be specific to one or more of the following areas:
 - Skill set
 - Formal certification or training program
 - Competency
- The skill set, competency, and/or certification required must be documented in written form. Documentation must demonstrate business necessity for the skill set, competency, and/or certification required. The written documentation must also provide a training plan and an outline of the specific criteria necessary to achieve the requirement.
- External training requirements (off-site training, conferences, etc.) and investment of resources for training that support the request for a special qualification must be documented.
- First-level supervisor **and** unit/department director signature approval of the request is required.
- When a position for which a special qualification has been approved becomes vacant, the recruiting announcement must reflect that achievement of the skill set, competency, and/or certification is required within the probationary period.

An Employment Services professional will review the special qualification request, contact the requesting department for clarification as needed, and then provide a formal response to the request in written form. The approval or disapproval will also be documented in the official position file. Questions regarding this process should be referred to Employment Services at 303/492-6475.

**SPECIAL QUALIFICATION REQUEST
SKILL, COMPETENCY OR CERTIFICATION**

To download this form as a Word document, [click here](#)

Department: _____ Position #: _____

Job Class Title: _____ Incumbent Name: _____

Date Training Program Began: < insert date >

Description of Request (Business necessity must be demonstrated. Additional pages may be attached.)

As of < insert date >, the above employee has successfully fulfilled the specific criteria and required training to achieve < insert skill, competency, or certification > during the training period (must exceed six months). Documentation of the criteria, training plan and investment of resources is attached.

Supervisor Signature and Date

Unit/Department Director Signature and Date

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The special qualification is approved/disapproved as of < insert date >.

Reason for approval/disapproval:

Human Resources Specialist Signature and Date