

MnSCU Academic Professional Class Series Guidebook

The MnSCU Academic Professional class series (formerly MnSCU Program Director series) is designed for professionals in academic and academic support programs. Positions within this series are directly involved in performing academic research, academic program administration, academic program outreach or academic public service responsibilities such as institutional relations, alumni and foundation activities.

The positions in this class series are unclassified under M.S. 43A.08, Subd. 1(9) – “presidents, vice-presidents, deans, other managers and professionals in academic and academic support programs, administrative or service faculty, teachers, research assistants, and student employees eligible under terms of the federal Economic Opportunity Act work study program in the Perpich Center for Arts Education and the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, but not the custodial, clerical, or maintenance employees, or any professional or managerial employee performing duties in connection with the business administration of these institutions.”

This guidebook will be revised and updated as additional classification decisions clarify and expand on the classification concepts for this series. It’s possible a position may involve work at two or more levels in this series. Positions are allocated based on the level of the majority of the work being performed.

MnSCU Academic Professional 1 (05L) – former MnSCU Program Director 1

Employees perform professional level functions for a relatively small or homogeneous academic/administrative program area that supports the academic programs within a college. At this level, incumbents serve primarily as an advisor or technical resource for a program or program area. Incumbents often assist in the development of program procedures and processes and may have limited budgetary authority.

EXAMPLE RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Serve as a professional resource for academic advising to students, parents, local faculty, staff and administration.
- Provide advice about program planning, degree planning, course selections, course/academic performance and scheduling, graduation requirements, degree audits, transfer articulations, and transfer evaluations.
- Provide pertinent information and advice to students.
- Perform outreach activities (i.e., recruit, attend college fairs, etc).
- Implement (or carry out) advising processes, related resources, and special projects aimed toward developing and maintaining working relationships with assigned advisees to maximize student achievement, retention, persistence, and educational goal attainment.

KNOW-HOW:

Positions at this level require specialized skills acquired through a combination of job related post-secondary training and/or prior experience. Incumbents are seen as individual contributors who are assigned to complete tasks, combinations of tasks or functional activities. Incumbents regularly interact with others within the organization or with customers or the public and skills of persuasiveness or assertiveness as well as sensitivity to the other person's point of view are often required to influence behavior, change an opinion, or turn a situation around.

Knowledge of (illustrative examples):

- State and Federal statutes and regulations to ensure compliance in all facets of a program.
- Student services policies and procedures.
- Current academic requirements for majors, minors, and certificates of the college.
- Outside resources and the ability to locate resources to address student needs.
- Understanding and awareness of specific needs and characteristics of the assigned advising population.

Ability to (illustrative examples):

- Communicate effectively with students (orally and in writing).
- Establish and maintain professional relationships with the internal and external college and community including students, peers, key contacts, and stakeholders.
- Implement and communicate process changes.
- Relate to individuals and groups of students through the use of a variety of communication techniques (i.e., presentations, workshops, face-to-face, etc.), helping skills, and problem-solving skills.
- Use analytic reasoning to identify alternative solutions and approaches to problems.

PROBLEM-SOLVING:

Apply and follow college-wide and program or department policies and procedures as well as state and federal laws. Innovation is most often expressed as process improvements.

ACCOUNTABILITY/FREEDOM TO ACT:

Employees perform a variety of tasks and duties, and on a daily basis clearly understand what results (output) are expected by the supervisor. Incumbents are not permitted to deviate from standard practices and procedures without supervisor's approval. Incumbents are permitted to set their own priorities, subject to supervisor's approval.

MnSCU Academic Professional 2 (07L) – new class

Similar to the MnSCU Academic Professional 1 positions, employees at this level are also responsible for performing professional level functions for a small or homogeneous academic/administrative program area. The level of problem-solving and accountability for these positions is seen as being greater than the MnSCU Academic Professional 1's because

incumbents are determining alternatives and resolving a broader range of student issues or concerns and have greater involvement in the decision making processes including evaluation and recommending changes, and also for developing processes within the established policies and procedures. Alternatively, incumbents may assist in the direction of a large department or division or be responsible for the overall program direction of a small or homogenous academic or student program area.

EXAMPLE RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Develop, communicate, interpret, and implement academic policies, processes, and procedures effectively with and through stakeholders.
- Advise students to provide them with information and resources on career and program major choices, curriculum, job placement, admissions and enrollment procedures, business office policies, financial aid, residency requirements, housing options, and child care services.
- Provide educational advising to students by utilizing knowledge of college curriculum, tutorial services, financial aid, and social activities to assist students in the selection of appropriate developmental or academic courses, obtaining tutorial assistance and in participating in campus activities to help them make a successful transition from home to campus life.
- Identify grant opportunities and assist in writing the grant.

KNOW-HOW:

Positions require specialized skills acquired through a combination of job related post-secondary training and prior experience. Incumbents are seen as individual contributors who are assigned to complete tasks, combinations of tasks or functional activities. Incumbents regularly interact with others within the organization and/or with customers or the public, and skills of persuasiveness or assertiveness as well as sensitivity to the other person's point of view are often required to influence behavior, change an opinion, or turn a situation around.

Knowledge of (illustrative examples):

- College policies and procedures, programs and curriculum, services, and resources to assist applicants and students in making sound career and educational decisions.
- Decision making skills along with the ability to communicate and collaborate with others.
- Available resources in order to recommend those that are most appropriate, including referral to counselors, staff and other programs and services.

Ability to (illustrative examples):

- Interpret institutional, state, and federal policies and guidelines and translate them into advising procedures and processes, working to resolve incongruencies.
- Develop and maintain working relationships with peers at other higher education institutions and secure knowledge of applicable transfer issues.

- Communicate orally for all planning sessions, for making speeches and presentations, and for conducting telephone discussions.
- Apply college policies consistently, but fairly, in each situation.
- Set job priorities, use analytic reasoning, and determine alternatives to problems facing college students.
- Research current trends, evaluate and select material appropriate for a wide variety of users.
- Assess individual student needs and identify applicable resources.
- Communicate in writing sufficient to develop reports or informational items.

PROBLEM-SOLVING:

Apply established policies, procedures and precedents as well as laws and regulations of state and federal agencies or other governing bodies. Interpret current policies and procedures relative to well defined issues and recommend innovative solutions where none exist.

ACCOUNTABILITY/FREEDOM TO ACT:

Independent decisions are made within the program, in conformance with policies and precedents.

MnSCU Academic Professional 3 (10L) – former MnSCU Program Director 2

Employees serve as the Director of a medium to large program or direct various small but related programs. The Director is responsible for establishing operating procedures and processes including the programs goals and work plans; developing and administering the program budget; and some positions may provide lead work to other professional level advising positions or clerical/administrative staff.

EXAMPLE RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Interpret statutes, policies and guidelines translating them into program procedures and processes.
- Develop the program's goals and work plans.
- Develop the program's budget.
- Conduct research to support the college's academic and student support programs.
- Develop research methodologies, select, gather, and analyze appropriate data elements.
- Develop reports for college administrators, MnSCU and federal agencies.
- Promote cooperation among businesses, industry, the local community and the college.
- Serve as a member and represent the College on external community committees and task forces.
- Manage grants and complete reporting requirements.

KNOW-HOW:

Positions require specialized skills acquired through a combination of job related post-secondary training and considerable related prior experience to conduct and continually improve a work process with awareness of immediate effects on customers. Alternative or

combined skills in understanding, teaming with, collaborating with, and/or influencing other people are important to cause action or understanding by others.

Knowledge of (illustrative examples):

- State and Federal statutes and regulations to ensure compliance in all facets of a program.
- Research and evaluation methodologies sufficient to determine program effectiveness.
- College programs sufficient to develop and integrate appropriate and supportive programs and activities.
- Mission of the institution sufficient to ensure that the program's goals and objectives are met.
- Grant writing sufficient to secure outside funding for program area.

Ability to (illustrative examples):

- Analyze situations and data and integrate results into meaningful program activities.
- Communicate orally and in writing to diverse audiences and motivate others through written and oral presentations.
- Direct and coordinate multiple related assignments and tasks.
- Interact and relate well with all segments of the college community OR work cooperatively with internal and external clients.
- Manage and provide leadership.
- Motivate cooperation among the college, businesses, and the community.

PROBLEM-SOLVING:

Interpret current policies and procedures relative to complex issues that affect others and recommend innovative solutions. Communicate with those affected prior to implementation.

ACCOUNTABILITY/FREEDOM TO ACT:

Program level decisions are made by choosing from among multiple courses of action that affect stakeholders with diverse interests. Decisions may affect more than one program.

MnSCU Academic Professional 4 (13L) – new class

Examples of positions at this level include:

Responsibility for designing, strategic planning, and implementation of a comprehensive college advancement and fund development program, in addition to, serving as the Chief Development Officer having responsibility for both external relations and serving as the Director of the Foundation. This includes providing leadership for marketing and recruitment, external and public relations, friend raising, fund raising gifts and grants, and alumni association development.

Responsibility for providing investigation services along with consistency and quality in implementing policies and procedures in investigations of harassment or discrimination complaints as well as general harassment and misconduct complaints; provide regional training

to administrators, faculty, staff and students in the prevention of discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual violence, and general harassment. Assure compliance with State and Federal policy and Statute; advance diversity and improve campus climate; and provide consultation to colleges on issues such of investigation, diversity, policy, and procedure.

EXAMPLE RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Design, modify and implement an integrated external relations marketing plan that includes enrollment, the Foundation, and relates to Custom College.
- Develop and produce college print materials, electronic communications, media relations, advertising campaigns, special events, and serves as the key communicator.
- Oversee the management of the scholarship program and the allocation process.
- Provide investigation services on a regional basis for sexual harassment and discrimination complaints regarding protected classes involving employees and students. Conduct investigations into misconduct as requested.
- Organizes and formulates an investigative work plan to determine if further action is warranted and the probable scope of the investigation by setting investigative priorities and be reviewing allegations of misconduct, criminal acts, and rule violations.
- Provide employee training in the prevention of discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual violence, and general harassment.
- Provide consultation services to colleges on various related issues.
- Provide leadership to the participating colleges' staff and administrators in the advancement of a diverse workforce.

KNOW-HOW:

Positions require a thorough understanding and application of theoretical or scientific principles, whether acquired through college education or some other equivalent preparation needed to critique and evaluate the work of advanced professional staff to assure work quality and continually improve work processes with strong awareness of most immediate and sustained effects on customers. Activities have specific objectives and content, but coordination of, and with, related activities is required. Ability to influence, persuade, understand and work collaboratively with others are essential.

Knowledge of (illustrative examples):

- Public relations, fundraising, market research, and advertising in addition to a comprehensive understanding of the print industry.
- College and MnSCU policies, programs and curriculum content, sufficient to edit college documents of record.

Ability to (illustrative examples):

- Communicate effectively (both written and oral) with good human relation skills.
- Work independently, as well as in team situations within the confines of the established budget.

PROBLEM-SOLVING:

Interpret current policies and procedures relative to complex issues that affect others and recommend innovative solutions. Communicate with those affected prior to implementation.

ACCOUNTABILITY/FREEDOM TO ACT:

Program level decisions are made by choosing from among multiple courses of action that affect stakeholders with diverse interests. Decisions may affect more than one program.

MnSCU Academic Professional 5 (17L) – former MnSCU Program Director 3

Employees serve as a recognized expert where s/he directs educational research and specialized programs and is responsible for analyzing and recommending new and modified policies. At this level, responsibilities support MnSCU's decision making and long-range organizational and system planning and incumbents frequently serve as liaisons with other state and federal agencies as well as provide direction to interdisciplinary task forces and committees. They analyze and develop legislation; conduct fiscal, budgetary, and cost/benefit analysis.

EXAMPLE RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Conduct policy research, analysis and evaluation in support or improvement of department policies and programs.
- Research, recommend and disseminate informational resources that will aid in the area of accreditation and distance learning.
- Advise and consult with campus administrators, faculty and staff about planning, implementing and promoting of accreditation and quality standards.
- Research and assist with distance education assessment policies nationally, statewide and locally.
- Support statewide best practice initiatives for showcasing continuous improvement strategies and processes.
- Provide guidance in the utilization of simulation and technology in the delivery of health education programs.
- Participate in long-range planning as it relates to technology/learning excellence and the use of simulation technology.
- Lead and manage the Arrowhead University Consortium in collaboration with founding university partners, other four-year higher education institutions and the colleges of the Northeast Minnesota Higher Education District.

KNOW-HOW:

Positions require a broad grasp of at least one complex body of practices and precedents, or of advanced principles of a specialized field of knowledge, needed to establish, conduct and continually improve work processes with strong awareness of immediate and sustained effects on customers. Proficiency is gained through wide exposure, in a technique which combines a broad understanding either of involved practices and precedents, or of scientific theory and principles, or both. This is the professional skills level in which knowledge has been

supplemented by substantial applicable work experience or enhanced by additional schooling in a field of specialization in order to meet job requirements.

Knowledge of (illustrative examples):

- Federal law and related state laws, rules and regulations governing the program area.
- Educational philosophy and practices.
- Quantitative research methodologies applicable to post-secondary education.
- Fiscal management practices, federal and state administrative processes and auditing requirements.
- Contemporary issues and trends relating to the transformation of higher education into the Knowledge/Information Age (e.g., lifelong learning, student-centered learning, inquiry-based learning, virtual universities, fusion of learning and work, distributed learning, etc).
- Higher education systems and structure.
- Educational policy issues and alternatives for addressing policy issues.
- Curriculum development, needs assessment, and evaluation techniques.

Ability to (illustrative examples):

- Think creatively and move ideas from concept to reality.
- Negotiate, compromise and motivate others to accomplish work goals.
- Plan, organize and administer multiple activities.
- Communicate orally and in writing to diverse audiences. Motivate others through written and oral presentations.
- Recognize and clarify problems when they exist and recognize the limitations and applicability of data to issues.
- Conceptualize and execute creative, efficient and effective solutions to problems.
- Identify alternatives, assesses needs, prioritize and recommend alternatives.
- Evaluate recommendations from committees, institutional staff and other users to determine effectiveness and efficiency; then determine best methods for delivering services.

PROBLEM-SOLVING:

A high level of innovation is needed to proactively address issues affecting the programs and/or departments. Most issues are addressed independently. Consultation occurs as appropriate in highly sensitive or complex situations.

ACCOUNTABILITY/FREEDOM TO ACT:

Decisions are made within the programs and/or departments that affect multiple stakeholders with competing interests. May involve review of decisions made at lower levels.

MnSCU Academic Professional 6 (20L) – former MnSCU Program Director 4

Employees serve as a recognized expert for a relatively large and complex professional/administrative program or specialized professional services where the incumbent directs educational research and specialized programs and is responsible for analyzing and recommending new and modified policies. At this level, responsibilities support MnSCU's decision making and long-range organizational and system planning and incumbents frequently serve as liaisons with other state and federal agencies as well as provide direction to interdisciplinary task forces and committees. They analyze and develop legislation; conduct fiscal, budgetary, and cost/benefit analysis.

EXAMPLE RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Create and lead processes that support decisions to approve new program requests and modifications to existing programs.
- Consult with institution staff on new program ideas, provide advice regarding preparation of program applications including program design, and consult with cooperating institutions or secondary schools.
- Research academic program policy and draft language for new or revised academic policy and procedures.
- Develop and coordinate academic program standards, measures, procedures, and accountability expectations of federal and state government which assure quality and efficiency.
- Develop strategies and manage the stewardship of grants from local, regional, and national corporations and foundations including building relationships with senior corporate and foundation executives.
- Establish and manage processes for maintaining high-quality records on foundations/corporations and other organizations in various stages of cultivation.

KNOW-HOW:

Positions require a broad grasp of at least one complex body of practices and precedents, or of advanced principles of a specialized field of knowledge, needed to establish, conduct and continually improve work processes with strong awareness of immediate and sustained effects on customers. Proficiency is gained through wide exposure, in a technique which combines a broad understanding either of involved practices and precedents, or of scientific theory and principles, or both. This is the professional skills level in which knowledge has been supplemented by substantial applicable work experience or enhanced by additional schooling in a field of specialization in order to meet job requirements.

Knowledge of (illustrative examples):

- Minnesota public higher education academic issues, programs, and policies.
- Academic, vocational, and technical education issues, practices and concerns.
- National trends, legislation, and professional organizations in higher education professional development and industry training.

- Educational policy issues related to faculty and staff development and alternatives for reorganization of curriculum, delivery methods, pedagogy, assessment, accreditation and the use of educational resources.

Ability to (illustrative examples):

- Mediate conflicting views of constituency groups and build consensus.
- Interact effectively with different groups including faculty, presidents, vice presidents, deans, boards, legislators, business and labor leaders, community leaders, and others as appropriate.
- Effectively anticipate, identify, analyze, monitor and evaluate the various types of academic program issues.

PROBLEM-SOLVING:

A high level of innovation is needed to proactively address issues affecting the programs and/or departments. May require innovative solutions to situations without precedent or in definition of new directions. Most issues are resolved independently; consultation occurs in order to take into account the communication needs of management and administration.

ACCOUNTABILITY/FREEDOM TO ACT:

Program and/or departmental level decisions are made that balance competing priorities and needs of various departments, programs, and stakeholders. Decisions are typically made following solicitation of input from affected stakeholders.

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