



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS REGARDING SALARY PLACEMENT DETERMINATIONS Minnesota State College Faculty [MSCF]

October 2006

INITIAL STEP PLACEMENT

➤ **What is qualified experience?**

All teaching experience regardless of level qualifies for step placement. Other work experience that is relevant to your discipline/work assignment at the college will qualify for step placement.

➤ **How much qualified experience will count for step placement?**

One full-time academic year of teaching equals one year. The full-time equivalency for other work is based on a 12-month year, 40 hours per week. In no instance will greater than one full-time year of experience in the same year count toward more than one step.

New faculty members with only one year of qualified experience shall be initially placed at a minimum of step two. Faculty with more experience will have the aggregate sum of relevant experience rounded up to the next salary step. For example: 1.5 years of experience equals step 02; 5.25 years equals step 06; 4.00 years equals step 05, etc.

Initial step placement shall not exceed step 13 for column I; step 11 for column II; step 9 for column III; step 8 for column IV; and step 7 for column V.

➤ **Why wasn't my graduate teaching assistant experience credited?**

Experience as a teaching assistant, graduate assistant or lecturer, must be supported by official documentation [from an authorized employer representative at the university or college where the experience occurred] that there was full responsibility for instruction, including evaluation.

INITIAL COLUMN PLACEMENT & COLUMN CHANGES

➤ **Where should I send my completed paperwork for an official column and step placement?**

Be sure to submit *all* completed forms, official transcripts, and other relevant documents to the college human resources office. The college HR office will verify your assignment(s)/credential field(s), appointment status and the effective date of your salary determination. The college HR office will also determine your step placement prior to sending your completed packet of materials to the Office of the Chancellor for your column placement and final approval of your salary. The Office of the Chancellor will notify you by federal mail of the final salary decision.

➤ **What is a credential field?**

It is the assigned field or licensed area for which the faculty member was hired. The granting of which indicates that the faculty member meets the minimum qualifications required by the Board of Trustee policies. Information regarding the established minimum qualifications for credential fields can be found at the following websites:

Assigned fields - <http://www.hr.mnscu.edu/HROffice/cc/assignedfields.pdf>

License fields - http://www.licensure.mnscu.edu/license_fields.html

➤ **What are "in-credential field" degrees?**

An in-credential field degree is defined as a bachelor's, master's or doctorate degree with a major that is *directly* related to the faculty member's credential field and/or assignment at the college.

➤ **What are “in-credential field” graduate courses?**

To be counted in-credential field, the course must have a department name, course title, or course description that *directly* relates to the faculty member's credential field and/or assignment. At times, additional information about the course is needed to complete the evaluation. The faculty member may submit *published* course descriptions, course syllabus and documentation as to how the course requirements were met (e.g. reading assignments, papers, projects).

➤ **How are Education master’s degrees and graduate credits evaluated for column placement?**

Only faculty members who teach in an occupational or technical area in which there is *no* advanced degree available will automatically receive in-field credit for an Education master’s degree and in-field credit for graduate level education courses.

Faculty members teaching education courses at a 2-year college will also receive in-field credit in accordance with the in-field criteria stated above.

➤ **What is my column if I don’t have a bachelor’s degree nor post baccalaureate coursework or graduate degree?**

Faculty members who do not have a bachelor’s degree or at least 120 undergraduate semester credits will automatically be placed on column I.

Faculty members with a bachelor’s degree in any field or at least 120 undergraduate semester credits in any field but *no* “in-field” master’s degree or bachelor’s degree with 24 “in-field” graduate semester credits will automatically be placed on column II.

➤ **Why weren't all of my courses required for my graduate degree counted "in-field"?**

All courses required for the graduate degree are not necessarily "in-field"; e.g. a master's degree in psychology might require statistics, but statistics is not "in-field" for Psychology; a master's degree in counseling may require a psychology course, but psychology is not "in-field" for Counseling.

Also, graduate courses that are helpful or supportive in teaching the discipline are not necessarily "in-field"; e.g. public health courses might be helpful for Nursing, but many of them do not count "in-field" if they emphasize general public health issues rather than content specific to the discipline of Nursing.

➤ **What about graduate courses I’ve taken that were not graded at all [such as some thesis credits]? What about courses with "S" or "P" grades?**

Only graduate courses for which a grade has been received may be counted for salary placement. Grades of "S" or "P" are considered as "C" grades and are acceptable as long as the average grade for all graduate courses counted for salary placement is "B" or higher.

➤ **Will all of my master’s and/or doctoral thesis credits be counted for salary placement?**

Only the number of master’s and/or doctoral thesis credits *required* for that particular degree for which a letter grade or pass/satisfactory acknowledgement was issued will be counted. Thesis credits exceeding the number required for the degree [usually taken for "continuous enrollment" in a graduate program prior to completing the degree] are not counted.

➤ **How can I assure that future graduate courses I take are "in-field"?**

Pre-approval! Pre-approval is critically important if you intend to take a course that by course prefix, number and title don’t obviously correspond to your discipline/work assignment. Pre-approval can be obtained in two ways. First, your college president or designee can pre-approve a graduate course as in-field. Or, you may call the Office of the Chancellor, Personnel Division and/or send copies of *published* course descriptions about the proposed course(s) for prior determinations.

- **Colleges are on semester credits, why are we evaluating column placement using quarter credits?**
The MSCF process is modeled after the former MCCFA process and community colleges have calculated salary placements using quarter credits since salary placements began several decades ago. Because the majority of faculty members still have their salary placement information in quarter credits, it was deemed less disruptive to continue using quarter credits rather than convert everything to semester credits at this time. Therefore, the current MSCF contract retained the quarter credit language for Article 13, Wages. Unless otherwise explicitly stated in the “transcript key” for a particular institution, 1-semester credit equates to 1.5-quarter credits for purposes of salary evaluation.

- **What about foreign transcripts? How are they evaluated?**
Faculty must arrange to have foreign transcripts translated into English [as necessary] and have them interpreted as to equivalency to U.S. undergraduate and graduate credits. A list of agencies that will perform this service is available from your college human resources office or the Office of the Chancellor, Personnel Division. Or you can print the list from: <http://www.hr.mnscu.edu/forms/MSCF/foreignTranscriptEvalService.htm> *Costs for this service are the responsibility of the faculty member.*

- **How do I advance to a higher column?**
First you must provide a written statement of intent to change columns to your college human resources office verifying that the requirements for a column change will be completed prior to the start of the semester. Failure to meet this notice requirement will delay the effective date of the column change to the start of the next semester. Once proper notice is given, final documents such as a transcript can be submitted after new courses taken are posted on the transcript. Upon receipt of the transcript the column evaluation will be completed, approved, and if the above required notice statement has been submitted, the column change will be retroactive to the start of the semester in accordance with your written statement.

Former UTCE faculty members who meet the criteria in *Article 13, Section 3. Subd. 3. Licensed Faculty Members on Column I or Column II* must also adhere to the written statement requirement if a column change is being made using the issuance of a five (5) year renewed license.

- **When will salary placement determinations be reflected on my paycheck?**
Payroll changes that will occur as a result of salary placement decisions will occur after payroll is processed *by your college human resources office*. Please contact them with any payroll questions you may have.

- **I don't agree with the salary placement [column and/or step] done for me, what can I do now?**
Faculty members have the right to appeal their salary placement decision. The appeal period is thirty (30) working days from receipt of your salary placement evaluation. Often time some courses need to have further documentation submitted in order for the course to be reconsidered. Any additional information should be submitted as soon as possible once notice is given within the 30-day period.

A challenge to a salary placement evaluation can be made by the faculty member or MSCF on behalf of the faculty member. Salary placement determinations may also be grieved.

- **As a former MCCFA faculty member I met the June 30, 2000 deadline and elected the 1998-99 column placement language, what does that mean for me now?**
The grandparented language to access the 1998-99 column placement language in the former MCCFA contract expired on June 30, 2004. All MSCF faculty members are now covered by the current MSCF contract for column placement and column movement determinations.