



## Q & A MSCF [FORMER UTCE] FACULTY MEMBERS INITIAL COLUMN PLACEMENT DETERMINATIONS & COLUMN CHANGES

- **WHAT IS A CREDENTIAL FIELD?**

It is the new general term used in the MSCF contract to define an assigned field for a former MCCFA faculty member or a license area for a former UTCE faculty member for which the faculty member was hired. The granting of a credential field indicates that the faculty member meets the minimum qualifications required by Board Policy.
- **WHAT ARE "IN-CREDENTIAL FIELD" DEGREES AND COURSES?**

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

The same applies to individual 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 the course syllabus and documentation as to how the course requirements were met (e.g. published course catalog descriptions, reading assignments, papers, projects).
- **HOW ARE EDUCATION, VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND CURRICULUM & INSTRUCTION MASTER'S DEGREES AND GRADUATE CREDITS EVALUATED FOR COLUMN PLACEMENT?**

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

Faculty members teaching education courses at a 2-year college will also receive in-credential field credit in accordance with the in-credential field criteria stated above.
- **WHAT IS MY COLUMN IF I DON'T HAVE A BACHELOR'S DEGREE NOR POST BACCALAUREATE COURSEWORK OR A 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 who do not have a graduate degree will automatically be placed on column II.
- **WHAT IS MY COLUMN IF I HAVE A BACHELOR'S DEGREE AND SOME GRADUATE CREDITS?**

Faculty members with a bachelor's degree and at least 24 graduate semester credits in-credential field will be placed on column III.
- **WHY WEREN'T ALL OF MY COURSES REQUIRED FOR MY GRADUATE DEGREE COUNTED AS IN-CREDENTIAL FIELD CREDITS?**

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

Also, graduate courses that are helpful or supportive in teaching the discipline are not necessarily "in-credential field"; e.g. math courses might be supportive for computer science or physics, but many of them do not count "in-credential field" if the core component of the course is math rather than content specific to computer science or physics.
- **WHAT ABOUT GRADUATE COURSES THAT I TOOK FOR WHICH NO LETTER GRADE WAS AWARDED [SUCH AS SOME THESIS CREDITS]? WHAT ABOUT COURSES WITH "S" OR "P" GRADES?**

Only courses taken for graduate credit for which a grade has been received may be counted for column 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 column placement is "B" or higher.
- **WILL ALL OF MY MASTER'S AND/OR DOCTORAL THESIS CREDITS BE COUNTED FOR SALARY PLACEMENT?**

The number of masters and/or doctoral thesis credits required for that particular degree 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 COURSES I TAKE FOR GRADUATE CREDIT COUNT AS IN-CREDENTIAL FIELD CREDITS?*  
 Pre-approval! Pre-approval is critically important if you intend to take a course that by course prefix, number and title does not directly correspond to your credential field or work assignment. Pre-approval can be obtained in two ways. First, your college president or designee can pre-approve a *graduate* level course as in-credential field. Or, you may call the Office of the Chancellor, Personnel Division and/or send materials about the proposed course(s) for a prior determination evaluation.
- *COLLEGES ARE ON SEMESTER CREDITS, WHY ARE WE EVALUATING COLUMN PLACEMENT USING QUARTER CREDITS?*  
 The process in the MSCF contract is modeled after the process in the former MCCFA contract and community colleges have calculated column placements using quarter credits since column placements began several decades ago. Since the majority of faculty members still have their placement information in quarter credits, it was deemed appropriate to continue using quarter credits rather than converting everything to semester credits at this time. Therefore, the current MSCF contract retained the quarter credit language in Article 13, Wages.
- *WHAT ABOUT FOREIGN TRANSCRIPTS? HOW ARE THEY EVALUATED?*  
 Faculty must arrange to have foreign transcripts translated into English [as necessary] and have them interpreted for equivalency to U.S. credits and degrees. 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. *Any costs for this service are the responsibility of the faculty member.*
- *AFTER MY INITIAL COLUMN PLACEMENT, 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 stating that the requirements for a column change will be completed prior to the start of the next semester. Failure to meet this notice requirement will delay the effective date of the column change to the start of the following semester for which you intended. Once proper notice is given, final documents such as a completed “Column Placement/Change Graduate Credit Listing by Faculty Member” form listing the new courses taken or degree achieved plus the transcript(s) verifying the additional courses and/or degree must be submitted the HR office. Upon receipt of the completed form and transcript(s) the column evaluation will be completed and approved if the requirements have been met retroactive to the start of the semester in accordance with the written statement.

Faculty members on columns I or II intending to move to the next column based on the renewal of their 5-year license must also provide a written statement of intent to change columns. Verification of the renewal must be provided to the HR office upon receipt of the notice from the MnSCU Licensure Office. Upon receipt of the renewed license the column evaluation will be completed and approved retroactive to the start of the semester in accordance with the written statement.
- *IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE MSCF EMPLOYMENT CONTRACT, INITIAL COLUMN PLACEMENTS WERE EFFECTIVE FEBRUARY 1, 2003, IT IS NOW SEPTEMBER 2003 AND I JUST RECEIVED MY INITIAL COLUMN PLACEMENT TODAY. WHY DID IT TAKE SO LONG AND AM I ENTITLED TO A RETROACTIVE PAY ADJUSTMENT?*  
 Because of the large volume of initial placements to be completed the process is simply taking time. Initial placements have been completed in the order in which they were properly documented and received in the Office of the Chancellor Personnel Division. Even though initial column placements are effective February 1, 2003, the application of your initial column placement is the beginning of fall semester 2003 or at the start of extended days immediately preceding fall term, whichever is earlier.

The application of your initial column placement for academic year 2003-2004 does not result in a base salary increase. Rather, in accordance with the salary implementation language in the MSCF employment contract, your base salary was transitioned from column “I” to the higher “initial column” at the same base salary. For example, prior to receiving your initial column placement you were on column I, step 06 @ \$38,750. The initial column placement evaluation places you on column III. Your salary will transition from column I, step 06 @ \$38,750 to column III, step 02 @ \$38,750.
- *WHAT DO I DO IF I DON'T AGREE WITH MY COLUMN PLACEMENT?*  
 Faculty members have the right to appeal their column placement decision. The appeal period is thirty (30) working days from receipt of your column determination. Often times some courses need to have further documentation submitted in order for the course(s) 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 column placement determination can be made by the faculty member or a MSCF representative on the faculty member’s behalf.