

# Guidelines for Degree Requirements 7/1/15

## Academic Staff and Limited Appointees

Historically, a bachelor's degree has typically been required for Limited and Academic Staff positions. In addition, some Academic and Limited positions require an advanced degree. Advanced degree requirements are listed in the alphabetical listing of titles in the [Unclassified Title Guideline](#) (UTG).

With the movement of all vacant positions exempt from the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) into the Academic Staff or Limited employee category after 7/1/15, there will be some positions that do not require a bachelor's degree to attract and retain the most qualified applicants. There are three instances when this might occur:

1. Newly created Academic Staff or Limited titles created mapped from the former classified exempt title (e.g., Accountant, IS Specialist);
2. Former classified exempt titles mapped to existing Academic Staff or Limited titles (e.g., University Grants and Contract Specialist maps to Administrative Program Specialist); or
3. A newly created position with duties identified with an Academic Staff or Limited title that does not require a bachelor's degree based on past recruitments.

Divisions will review positions to identify those that do and do not require candidates to have a bachelor's degree before being hired. The decision to require a degree for numbers 1 and 2 above will require consultation with and approval from the Office of Human Resources (OHR) during the transitional phase between 7/1/15 and the completion of the title/compensation study. There is a precedent for attracting qualified applicants for these positions in the past, so divisions should avoid unnecessary exclusion for these vacancies by requiring a degree.

If a hiring department determines that a bachelor's degree may not be required for an Academic Staff or Limited position that has historically required a degree, the unit needs to include this information in the Position Vacancy Listing (PVL).

## Position Vacancy Listing

The degree requirement listed on the PVL will be used in determining if an applicant meets the minimum qualifications for the position. If a bachelor's degree is listed as a requirement, then an applicant must have a bachelor's degree to be qualified. If a hiring unit wants to change the PVL to eliminate the bachelor's degree requirement after the position is posted, the unit must work with OHR to re-post the position for at least two weeks.

If a unit determines that a bachelor's degree is not required, the "degree specialization" section on the PVL must be written to identify the minimum years of relevant work experience required to be eligible for the position in lieu of a bachelor's degree. Sample PVL language for degree exception in exchange for experience- QUALS Tab includes:

**Degree Specialization:**

- Bachelor's degree is preferred.
- A degree is not required for this position. Please refer to the "minimum years and relevant work experience" section below for more information on position requirements.

**Minimum Years and Relevant Work Experience:**

- Position requires X years of experience for appointment at the associate level.
- X years of applicable\* experience is equal to 1 year of university-level study. A minimum of X years of applicable experience is required for this position.

\*Applicable or relevant experience can be defined by the hiring unit, and should be determined before the search begins

**Advanced Degree**

For Academic Staff positions that are identified in the UTG to require an advanced degree (i.e., Scientist), we will continue to expect that candidates meet the minimum degree requirement. If extraordinary circumstances exist, the division may consider recruiting for one of these positions without requiring an advanced degree. In this case, the division must include, in the comment section of the PVL submitted to OHR, a statement justifying the degree waiver. The degree requirement listed on the PVL will be used in determining if an applicant meets the minimum qualifications for a position. If a master's degree or PhD is listed as a requirement, then an applicant must have that degree to be qualified for the position. If at any point a hiring unit wants to change the PVL to eliminate the advanced degree requirement after the position is posted, the unit must obtain approval from OHR and then repost the position for at least two weeks.

**Note from International Faculty and Staff Services (IFSS) pertaining to degree requirements for petitions:**

In order to file an H-1B petition for a candidate, the position must require at least a bachelor's degree in a **specific** area of study or specialization, that area of study **must be related to the job**, and **the applicant must have at least that degree**. This is a two-step assessment. The following are examples of situations in which the degree requirement listed on the PVL will impact the ability to file a petition. All questions on degree requirements for petitions must go to IFSS.

- If the position does not require a degree and the applicant has a master's degree in business administration, IFSS cannot file an H-1B.
- The job posting is for a research specialist in neuroscience. The job requires a bachelor's degree in biology, neurology, or a related field. The applicant has a bachelor's degree in microbiology. IFSS can file an H-1B.
- The job posting is for a research specialist in neuroscience. The job requires a bachelor's degree in biology, neurology, or a related field. Applicant has a PhD in geography. IFSS cannot file an H-1B.

### **Exempt Staff moving to Academic Staff as part of Employee Choice**

Employees in classified permanent exempt positions who will be able to choose to move to Academic Staff will be able to move into the designated Academic Staff title even if they do not have a bachelor's degree. If, at a later date, an employee wants to apply for other Academic Staff positions, the employee will be required to meet the minimum qualifications of the vacant position to be eligible.