

	FGCU POLICY 3.020	Responsible Unit: Human Resources
	Degree Waiver Policy	

A. POLICY STATEMENT

Florida Gulf Coast University seeks to provide equity when handling professional advancement and development of its staff, including those who lack degrees at the undergraduate level and above, when opportunities arise. Within the framework of filling an internal vacancy or for reclassifications, there are times when an employee's education and Experience merit advancement, but because of a degree requirement, such opportunities are precluded. Therefore, this Policy facilitates retention and advancement of internal incumbents whose education and Experience warrant further consideration for eligibility in administrative and professional (A&P) and support personnel (SP) positions where degrees are considered essential.

B. REASON FOR POLICY

This Policy provides University guidelines for promotions/reclassifications where an employee's education and/or Experience is comparable to those requiring a college degree and actual Experience requirements for a position to be attained. This Policy also ensures equity, uniformity, and consistency of the search and screen process.

C. DEFINITION OF TERMS

1. *Ability*: The capacity to perform an observable behavior or produce an acceptable product.
2. *Equivalent*: Actual education and/or Experience that may be substituted, in whole or in part, for education and/or Experience required in the Minimum Qualifications and position description of a particular job classification.
3. *Experience*: Work in a specific field or program generally outlined in the Minimum Qualifications in a position description of a particular job classification and determined necessary to perform successfully.
4. *Knowledge*: The organized body of information, facts, or principles that a person must possess for successful job performance.
5. *Minimum Qualifications*: Experience, training, education, licensure, certification, or a combination thereof, that provides appropriate job-related evidence that a person can perform the essential functions needed to be successful in a job classification.

6. *Skill*: The level of proficiency in certain tasks that a person must possess in order to be successful in a particular job classification.
7. *Substitution*: Accepting the education and/or Experience possessed by a current employee as Equivalent to the education and/or Experience required in the Minimum Qualifications and position descriptions of a particular job classification.

D. PROCEDURES

1. Request

- a. Requests to submit a waiver of degree for an internal University employee shall first be submitted by a hiring authority for authorization by the respective Vice President or the President, if the employee's work unit does not report to a Vice President.
- b. Upon appropriate authorization, the request should be forwarded to Human Resources (HR) to determine whether the actual education and/or Experience of the employee can be substituted for, or is comparable to, the required degree and Experience for a given position.
- c. Upon an assessment by HR that the Substitution is acceptable, the request will be sent to the Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance (OIEC) for an assessment of whether the desired waiver would likely result in any equity issues. The Director of the OIEC will then advise HR of the determination. The determinations of HR and OIEC are then provided to the respective Vice President (or President as applicable).
- d. The final authority for granting approval of a request for the waiver of the degree requirement will be the Vice President (or President, as applicable).

2. Other Considerations

- a. A waiver of degree may be requested due to a departmental reorganization in which a current employee is reclassified based on the needs of the organizational change.
- b. Requests for waivers of degree, when appropriate, should be submitted in writing accompanied by documentation of the facts pertaining to the situation. At a minimum, this documentation should include:
 - 1) A memorandum describing the specific circumstances and rationale for the request;
 - 2) The resume of the employee;
 - 3) The position description (A&P or SP only); and

- 4) Any other pertinent information that should be considered (for instance, whether efforts to recruit a candidate with the requisite degree failed, whether this can impact other similarly situated employees in the unit).
3. Every determination of equivalency shall be documented and maintained with the appropriate file as required by the Florida public records law.
 - a. HR confirms and verifies that an applicant's work Experience in an appropriate area of specialization is an Equivalent or comparable substitute for the required college education on a year-for-year basis.
 - 1) The amount of work Experience used to substitute for the required college education shall be based on the level of specialization required by the Minimum Qualifications.
 - 2) The amount of work Experience used to substitute for the required college education shall be based on the amount of time worked in the appropriate area of specialization.
 - 3) Any relevant work Experience paid shall be considered as Substitution for required college education.
 - 4) The job title, rank, and pay grade may be used in determining if job Experience can substitute for the required college education.
 4. Non-Discrimination and Equity

This Policy shall not be used to abridge the requirements of equal opportunity and equity in employment accorded by other University regulations, policies, and procedures

Authority

BOG Regulation 1.001, University Board of Trustees Powers and Duties

History of Policy

New 04/2005; Amended 02/01/06; Amended 08/11/09; Format Changed 09/10/19

APPROVED:

 *s/Wilson G. Bradshaw
Wilson G. Bradshaw, President

 May 19, 2009
Date