

SB 5 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Education

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Meeting Dates: 4/2, 4/7

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

The measure requires the governing board of each public university to establish a personnel policy that requires faculty teaching lower division courses to have at least a master's degree in a closely related field. It provides exemptions for faculty with professional experience in their field and for graduate students employed in teaching positions.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Equal standards for instructors teaching dual credit courses
- Ability for HECC to change administrative rule
- Accreditation standards
- Role of faculty vs boards in determining qualifications and selecting faculty

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

Under administrative rule OAR 589-008-0100, community college boards are required to establish a personnel policy, including a policy on instructor selection that includes standards for instructor qualifications. Standards for teachers of lower division collegiate courses must include a master's degree in a closely related field; this may be waived or substituted for individuals with demonstrated competencies and professional experience. The state has had the authority to adopt guidelines for personnel policies at community colleges since at least the 1990s (ORS 341.015). That authority was transferred to the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) in 2013 when it was created with the passage of House Bill 3120 (2013).

At public universities, factors such as academic classification, rank, and position descriptions for faculty members are often determined in the collective bargaining agreement between universities and labor organizations.

For example, in the 2020-2024 agreement between [Oregon State University](#) and United Academics of Oregon State University (UAOSU), OSU retains the authority to establish qualifications for faculty positions. The academic appointment guidelines policy at Oregon State University (OSU), updated February 20, 2023, require a master's degree or doctoral-level degree for all professorial categories. Certain instructional categories require only a bachelor's degree, including for faculty primarily providing instruction in academic learning services (ALS), English as a second language (ESL), or physical activity courses (PAC).

The 2022-2026 agreement between [Eastern Oregon University](#) and its faculty union lists specific qualifications for each rank, such as assistant professor, associate professor, instructor, and senior instructor I and II. According to the agreement, all of these ranks require a master's degree; for different instructor ranks, this can be substituted with equivalent experience or expertise in the intended area of teaching; for senior instructor II, deans must file a rationale with the Provost's Office when equivalency is recommended.

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Other universities' collective bargaining agreements also contain details about the rank that faculty members with different advanced degrees are eligible for, as well as the process for evaluating and documenting comparable experience. These include the agreements between faculty and [Portland State University](#), [University of Oregon](#), and [Western Oregon University](#). Western Oregon University uses the title "lecturer" to refer to non-tenure track faculty hired to perform instructional duties who hold a baccalaureate degree. At Southern Oregon University (SOU), the requirements for professorial ranks are determined in the [faculty bylaws](#), as adopted by the SOU Faculty Senate.