USF Philosophy on Minimum Qualifications

Minimum qualifications are an objective tool used to establish clear and appropriate eligibility standards for a specific position. They are utilized so that only applicants who are likely to possess the requisite entry-level knowledge, skills and abilities are considered for employment. They allow both applicants and employers to focus their attention on job matches which have the greatest probability of success. Minimum qualifications are also an essential concept for assessing possible employment discrimination. In addition, they provide critical rationale for pricing a job so that the salary being offered is commensurate with the labor market. The minimums also set a baseline so that appropriate training may be offered to advance the employee’s knowledge, skills and abilities.

Minimum qualifications ensure possession of the knowledge, skills, and abilities which prepare the new employee for the job.

- Some jobs require a specific educational level. A bachelor’s degree, for example, is evidence of a basic body of factual knowledge and skill with mathematics and language. It demonstrates the ability to learn from written material, to write on a variety of topics, and to make qualitative and quantitative comparisons. Many jobs require skills and abilities which are partly or wholly demonstrated by possession of a bachelor’s degree.
- Related job experience is evidence that an applicant possesses at least some of the knowledge, skills and abilities necessary to do a job. Of course an applicant who has done a very similar or identical job demonstrates a more complete possession of requisite knowledge, skills and abilities.
- A very specialized degree or specific occupational license provides further demonstration of the requisite knowledge, skills and abilities. For some occupations, the licensure is required by law.

Minimum qualifications ensure the applicant screening process is objective and removes the risk for bias or discrimination. Discrimination may be defined as different treatment of equally qualified individuals based on a protected category such as race, sex, or age. Thus, if two individuals have identical qualifications for hire, they should be treated similarly. In order for this process to work, qualifications must be specified. It would be very difficult to examine, or even define hiring discrimination without some reference to minimum qualifications. The establishment of appropriate minimum qualifications arguably encourages employers to treat equally qualified individuals the same in the first phase of an employment screening process.
Minimum qualifications have significant impact on compensation since employers typically price jobs on initial hire by the occupational field and the experience level required for entry. Thus employers may be viewed as paying new hires for demonstrated success in an occupational field. For example, when pricing a senior accountant, a compensation analyst takes into account both the degree in accounting and the accounting job experience in determining a hiring salary.

Minimum qualifications help employers to plan appropriate training programs. Typically, training will take an employee with the typical entry-level knowledge, skills and abilities, and add to these the very job-specific requirements.

There are several risks involved with hiring individuals who do not meet the minimum qualifications for a position including:

- Claims of unfair hiring practices
- Compliance issues with several Federal Equal Opportunity Laws including:
  - Title VII - The Civil Rights Act of 1964
  - Title I and Title V of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
  - The Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA)
- Compliance issues with Department of Labor laws including:
  - Veteran’s Preference
- Compliance issues with the collective bargaining agreements (CBAs) in place that speak to methods of filling vacancies at USF.
- Setting up new hires for failure instead of success.
- Increasing the likelihood of performance management and employee relations issues.