

## **UMaine Department of Communication and Journalism Policy on Hiring Part-Time Faculty: Substitution of Professional Experience for Academic Credentials**

The Department of Communication and Journalism prioritizes hiring part-time faculty who hold at least a master's degree in their respective fields, as this aligns with our commitment to academic excellence. However, we recognize that the nature of our various undergraduate degrees often involves significant professional experience, which can provide an equivalent measure of tested expertise and practical knowledge. Before recommending that a prospective part-time faculty member be hired, the Chair of the Department of Communication and Journalism (CMJ), in consultation with full-time faculty members, will thoroughly review the candidate's resume or curriculum vitae (CV). This review will assess the relevance and significance of their professional experience, ensuring that it meets the Department of Communication and Journalism's standards for educational excellence.

### **Policy Statement:**

#### **1. Preferred Qualification:**

- A minimum of a master's degree in a relevant field remains the preferred qualification for all part-time faculty positions within the Department of Communication and Journalism. To be considered for a part-time position, an individual must, at minimum, hold a bachelor's degree in a discipline relevant to the position.

#### **2. Substitution of Professional Experience:**

- When an individual does not hold a master's degree, the CMJ chair, in consultation with full-time faculty members, may consider significant professional experience as a substitute. This includes, but is not limited to, extensive experience as a journalist, reporter, photographer, videographer, editor, writer, PR or marketing professional, or other roles within the disciplines of communication, journalism, and media studies relevant to the position's responsibilities.

#### **3. Criteria for Consideration:**

- The professional experience must be demonstrably significant, typically involving a substantial body of work that reflects a high level of skill, creativity, and/or recognition within the industry. Consistent with the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences policy on minimum qualifications for new part-time faculty, posted at <https://umaine.edu/las/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2020/06/Part-time-Faculty-Hiring-Qualifications-CLAS-approved-10-25-19.pdf>, at least five years of professional experience is required.
- Experience should be current, ensuring the individual is well-versed in contemporary practices and trends within the discipline.

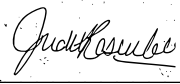
#### **4. Rationale:**

- Communication, journalism, and media studies are fields where professional expertise can develop through practical experience as well as formal academic training. The value of "tested experience" is widely recognized in higher education, particularly in disciplines where the industry standard is measured by practical achievements as much as it is by academic credentials.
  - The Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication emphasizes units hiring and supporting faculty members who have a “balance of academic and professional credentials,” and underscores the importance of instructors with current, professional expertise.
  - The UMaine College of Liberal Arts and Sciences has established “a master’s degree in an area commensurate with their teaching interest” as the minimum academic qualification for a part-time faculty hire. The College’s policy also states: “tested experience in the field may serve in place of formal educational preparation. Tested experience is defined as depth and breadth of experience outside of the classroom in non-academic situations relevant to the discipline in which the faculty member teaches.” This Department of Communication and Journalism’s policy aligns with the College policy, providing “appropriate metrics” for tested experience as stipulated by the College policy for hiring a part-time faculty member without a master’s degree.
5. **Conclusion:** This policy ensures that the Department of Communication and Journalism maintains high educational standards while leveraging the invaluable expertise of industry professionals who may not possess a master's degree but whose real-world experience and accomplishments make them exceptional educators who can teach the students of UMaine’s Department of Communication and Journalism.
6. **Effective Date:** This policy will be in effect one semester after approvals are obtained.

Approvals:

  
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 Emily Haddad, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Dean

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 1-3-24  
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 Date

  
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 Judith Rosenbaum-Andre, Chair, CMJ

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 1/5/24  
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 Date