

UMaine School of Performing Arts Policy on Hiring Part-Time Faculty: Substitution of Professional Experience for Academic Credentials

The School of Performing Arts prioritizes hiring part-time faculty who hold a Master's degree in their respective fields, as this aligns with our commitment to academic excellence. However, we recognize that the nature of the performing arts 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 School of Performing Arts Director, 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 UMaine School of Performing Arts standards for educational excellence.

Policy Statement:

1. Preferred Qualification:

- A master's degree in a relevant field remains the preferred qualification for all part-time faculty positions within the School of Performing Arts. 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 School of Performing Arts Director, 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 performer, designer, director, or other roles within the performing arts disciplines 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 technical 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.

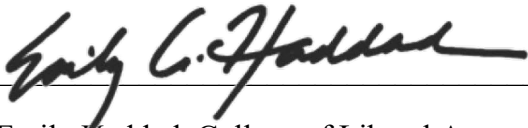
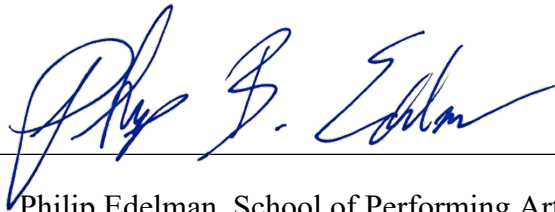
4. Rationale:

- The performing arts (music, theatre, and dance) are fields where professional expertise often develops through practical experience rather than 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 rather than solely by academic credentials.

- The National Association of Schools of Theatre (NAST) and the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM) acknowledge that "professional experience" can be considered as an appropriate qualification for teaching certain courses, especially in performance, design, and direction.
 - 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 School of Performing Arts 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 School of Performing Arts 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 School of Performing Arts.
6. **Effective Date:** This policy will be in effect one semester after approvals are obtained.

Approvals:

 _____ Emily Haddad, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Dean	 8-8-25 _____ Date
 _____ Philip Edelman, School of Performing Arts Director	 10/11/2024 _____ Date