***Fill and Grow Policy*** - approved 10/31/18, revised 6/18/19

Some MU Extension vacancies are hard to fill, for various reasons. In order to help fill these positions and provide programming to Missouri stakeholders in an efficient and timely manner, MU Extension is beginning a new policy called *Fill and Grow*. This policy will enable extension to hire specialists who have a bachelor's degree; their continued employment will be based on completion of a master's degree, or completion of other essential coursework.

**Criteria**

* There must be at least one failed search (30-day posting) in which applicants did not have the appropriate master's degree, or where an academically qualified candidate did not have the skills sets in teaching and/or stakeholder community relations.
* The regional director (RD) and education director (ED) supervising the position must both agree to the *Fill and Grow* approach for the position in question and the timeframe for moving to a *Fill and Grow* search.

**Process**

* The position will be reposted as an extension specialist (ES), with the education requirements amended to state:
	+ PhD or master's degree preferred (county engagement or field specialist title), bachelor's degree (extension specialist title) in the appropriate subject matter will be considered. Employment of a candidate with a bachelor’s degree will be as an extension specialist with the working title of county engagement specialist or field specialist. Faculty hired as an extension specialist will have the expectations a completing a master’s degree in an approved subject matter area. The faculty member will remain an extension specialist until completion of the approved master’s degree, or if he or she has a master's degree, has completed the agreed upon coursework.
* Expectations for obtaining a master’s degree or core course work
	+ Senior program directors (SPDs) will ensure equity across their program area on approved master's-level programs. The SPD and the ED, with input from the RD will determine what are appropriate bachelor's and master's degrees for the *Fill and Grow* position. They will also determine additional course work is needed by applicants with a master's degree in order for them to meet the requirements for a CES or FS position. They will work with the associate vice chancellor and director of off-campus operations to review questions and provide final resolution on appropriate master's degree programs.
	+ The extension specialist must either be working on a master’s degree in an approved field or be accepted into an approved master’s program for the position within six months of the start date.
		- Extension specialists not already in an approved master’s degree program will be given a six-month contract. Once accepted into an approved master’s degree program, they will be given an additional contract to complete the current MU contract year.
	+ The extension specialist will have three years (36 months) after acceptance into the approved program, or after their start date if they are in a master's degree program, to complete their master’s degree (total of 3.5 years), with the possibility of a one- two-year extension. The supervisor will coach the ES to ensure progress is being made towards the master’s degree. Progress will be evaluated annually by supervisors before a next-year contract is offered. If supervisors determine the ES has not progressed enough to ensure completion of the degree within the outlined period of time, the contract will not be renewed for the next year, and the search for a new faculty member will be launched.
* Extension specialists will not be considered for lateral moves unless it directly benefits MU Extension.
* Upon completion of their master’s degree or needed coursework, and with a record of good performance, an extension specialist will be transitioned to the ranked NTT title of assistant extension professional.