

Academic Qualifications and Equivalent Professional Experience Policy

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1. Objective

The Institute acknowledges the importance of having academic staff that are appropriately qualified with the requisite level of academic merit and/or professional experience to ensure that students are given the highest quality of teaching to facilitate their learning.

Accordingly, the Institute’s Academic Qualifications and Equivalent Professional Experience Policy and Procedure (“The Policy”) aims to outline the criteria for the Institute to determine the equivalence of professional experience to formal academic qualifications in line with AQF Standards.

This Policy ensures that the Institute complies with the *Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021*. Pursuant to this standard, the Policy’s objective is to ensure that academic staff:

- Are appropriately qualified in the relevant discipline for their level of teaching.
- Have a sound understanding of current scholarship and/or professional practice in the discipline that they teach; and
- Have an understanding of pedagogical and/or adult learning principles relevant to the student cohort being taught.

2. Scope

The Policy applies to all Academic Staff, whether full-time, sessional, new or existing.

3. Definitions

Academic Staff includes Deans, Program Directors, Unit Coordinators, Lecturers and Tutors.

Appropriately Qualified means qualified to at least one AQF level higher than the course of study being taught or have professional experience equivalent to at least one AQF level higher than the course of study.

AQF is the Australian Qualifications Framework.

AQF levels - are an indication of the relative complexity and/or depth of achievement and the autonomy required to demonstrate that achievement. AQF level 1 has the lowest complexity and AQF level 10 has the highest complexity.

Higher Degree Research and Scholarship Committee - is the responsible managerial body for the Institute's higher degree programs delivery and other research and scholarly activities.

Professional Experience – is experience obtained through the practice of a profession, including teaching experience, scholarship and professional practice and from which the professional competency, knowledge, skills and learning outcomes achieved can be assessed.

Research – is the systematic experimental and theoretical work, application and/or development that results in advancement in knowledge.

TEQSA is the Tertiary Education Quality Standards Agency.

4. Policy Provisions

a. Guiding Principles

- Academic staff teaching in a course will have the requisite level of qualification as required under this Policy. As required by Section 3.2.3(c) of the Higher Education Standards Framework 2021, this will be one AQF level higher than the course of study being taught or equivalent professional experience.
- The Institute is committed to ensuring equity for both existing and new staff. Judgements regarding qualifications are based on fair and transparent processes as outlined in this Policy. Relevant details of this policy will be communicated in writing to current and future staff in a timely manner.
- The Institute recognises that in some courses of study, professional experience may be needed in some areas of the discipline taught. Accordingly, academic staff may need to have professional experience in addition to formal qualifications to comply with this Policy.
- An academic staff member who is to be assessed on a combination of formal academic qualifications and professional experience must have at least academic qualifications at the same AQF level as the course of study that is being taught.
- Any teaching and professional experience must be current and relevant to the discipline area. Evidence and/or references must be provided to the Institute to support this.
- Where there is a formal research component in a unit of study, the staff member teaching the unit will be required to show that they have the relevant research skills and successful research experiences to comply with this Policy.
- Staff undertaking doctoral supervision must have doctoral or equivalent research experience.

Analysis of research equivalence will be undertaken by the Institute's Higher Degree Research and Scholarship Committee.

- In respect of Higher Degree Research Programs at either Level 9 Master or Level 10 PhD, staff must not only meet the requirements of this Policy but must meet additional criteria set out in the Higher Degree Research Supervision Policy.
- In assessing professional experience within a relevant discipline, the principle is that the professional experience of the staff member should provide them with the skills and knowledge equivalent to holding the relevant academic qualification. Therefore, the professional experience should be mapped to the relevant AQF levels to provide evidence of equivalence. The following types of professional experiences may be indicative of equivalence:
 - i. Performing in a role requiring high order judgement and provision of expert advice.
 - ii. Performing in a senior-level role.
 - iii. Management of significant projects in the field.
 - iv. Leadership in the development of professional standards.
 - v. Testimonials, awards or other recognition that acknowledges leadership or achievement in the discipline.
 - vi. Contributions to a discipline through participation in governing bodies, advisory boards or professional networks.
 - vii. Peer-reviewed publications in a relevant discipline.
 - viii. Other publications (e.g. books, reports) in a relevant discipline.
 - ix. Professional presentations, conference papers or invited contributions.
 - x. Leadership and/or management of research acknowledged by peers in a relevant discipline.

(Note that experience in one of these areas should not be deemed to be conclusive evidence of equivalent professional experience. Rather, judgments regarding equivalence are likely to be based on evidence of the existence of a combination of these types of experience as appropriate to the particular position under consideration.)

- Academic staff teaching in a nested course within a higher level course are expected to hold qualifications appropriate for the higher level course. This principle will apply where there is a mixture of students in units who are enrolled at different AQF levels.
- Professional development activity is undertaken by all staff, and the level of professional and academic experience informs the type and level of activity. A combination of professional development and academic oversight of activities ensures that in cases where an individual staff member fails to strongly meet all academic criteria, the staff member successfully transitions to their academic role.
- The Institute has set minimum requirements for academic qualifications and professional experience equivalence relating to Coursework awards (See Section 4b below). Notwithstanding, each case is considered on an individual basis, taking into account the specific needs of the unit and discipline area. The Institute makes the assumption that without meeting the minimum standards, it is unlikely that other criteria could be met. Staff who meet the minimum requirements must also present evidence that they meet other criteria such as those listed above and demonstrate how those criteria are met.

- Minimum requirements for academic qualifications and professional experience equivalence relating to higher degree research are prescribed in the Institute’s Higher Degree Research Supervision Policy.

b. Minimum requirements for the Qualifications of Academic Staff for Coursework Awards

AQF Level being taught	Minimum required AQF Level	Professional Experience Equivalent
Level 5 – Diploma	Level 7 – Bachelor Degree	No equivalence is recognised. The minimum requirement to teach at the Institute is a Bachelor Degree.
Level 6 – Associate Degree, Advanced Diploma	Level 7 – Bachelor Degree	No equivalence is recognised. The minimum requirement to teach at the Institute is a Bachelor Degree.
Level 7 – Bachelor Degree	Level 8 – Bachelor Honours, Graduate Certificates, Graduate Diplomas	<p>Level 7 Bachelor qualification and current registration to practice within the relevant profession and/or full membership of a relevant professional organisation PLUS EITHER:</p> <p>5 years of relevant teaching and/or research experience or professional experience, which totals to 8 years within the last 10 years</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Completion of at least two-thirds of a relevant level 9 (Master) course plus relevant teaching and/or research experience, which totals to 3 years or professional experience, which totals to 5 years within the last 8 years.</p>

<p>Level 8 – Bachelor Honours Degree, Graduate Certificate or Graduate Diploma</p>	<p>Level 9 – Master by research or coursework</p>	<p>Level 8 qualification and current registration to practice within the relevant profession and/or full membership of a relevant professional organisation PLUS EITHER:</p> <p>5 years of relevant teaching and/or research experience or professional experience, which totals to 8 years within the last 10 years</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Completion of at least two-thirds of a relevant level 9 (Master) course plus relevant teaching and/or research experience, which totals to 3 years or professional experience, which totals to 5 years within the last 8 years.</p>
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<p>Level 9 – Master Degree (Coursework)</p>	<p>Level 10 – PhD or DBA</p>	<p>Level 9 qualification and current registration to practice within the relevant profession and/or full membership of a relevant professional organisation PLUS EITHER:</p> <p>5 years of relevant teaching and/or research experience or professional experience, which totals 10 years within the last 15 years.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Completion of at least two-thirds of a relevant level 10 (Doctoral) course, plus relevant teaching and/or research experience, which totals to 3 years or professional experience which totals to 8 years within the last 12 years.</p>
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c. Exceptions

- Occasional guest lecturers will be exempt from the requirement of holding a qualification one AQF level higher than the course of study being taught. Instead, they must bring a high level of expertise and knowledge that will add value to the course of study and be subject to academic oversight.
- There may be exceptional circumstances not covered by this Policy, in which case the Dean of the relevant School will submit a case to the Provost for their consent. Any such case will be substantiated with evidence on how the skills, knowledge and experience of the staff member are of value to the course of study. Staff employed in these circumstances will be required to undertake professional development activities and will be supervised by staff who do meet requirements.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

- The Deans of the School, the Principal and/or the Provost will assess an academic staff member’s qualifications and professional equivalence levels pursuant to this Policy and AQF levels. These findings and any exceptional circumstances will be provided to the Vice President (Internal Operations) for record keeping.
- The Deans have overall responsibility for the implementation and effective administration of this Policy.
- The Academic Board will be responsible for the monitoring and review of the Policy.

6. Related Documents

Staff Recruitment Policy
Higher Degree Research Supervision Policy

7. Version Control

Historical Version	Approved by	Approval Date
2019.08	Academic Board	14 August 2019
2017.09	Academic Board	11 September 2017
2015.09	Academic Board	22 October 2015