

Procedure Title: **Determining Equivalent Experience for Academic Staff Qualifications in Higher Education**

Procedure Owner: **Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education)**

This procedure supports the University to operationalise the Academic Staff Qualifications or Equivalent Experience Policy and must be complied with.

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1. INTENT

The purpose of this procedure is to outline the process for ensuring Academic Staff who coordinate, teach or assess Courses or Units are appropriately equipped and qualified for their roles in accordance with the [Higher Education Standards Framework \(Threshold Standards\)](#) (HESF).

2. ORGANISATIONAL SCOPE

This procedure applies to all Academic Staff who are to be involved in Teaching Delivery and/or Teaching Related Duties and do not have the required formal qualifications to satisfy the required AQF Level as outlined in the HESF and [Academic Staff Qualifications or Equivalent Experience Policy](#). This includes any Academic Staff member employed directly by ECU or any person delivering content on behalf of ECU through an educational partnership arrangement.

Requirements for assessing the equivalence of academic, professional or practice-based experience of Academic Staff supervising Doctoral and Masters by Research courses are outlined in the [Supervision of Students Undertaking Higher Degrees by Research](#) Policy.

Requirements for assessing the equivalence of academic, professional or practice-based experience of Academic Staff delivering and assessing Vocational Education and Training (VET) units and courses are outlined in the [Academic Staff Qualifications for Vocational Education and Training Procedures](#).

3. DEFINITIONS

The [University Glossary](#) and the following definition applies to this procedure:

Term:	Definition:
Field of Education (FoE)	Means the Australian Government reporting classification system to describe and group courses, specialisations and units based on their vocational emphasis (see www.tcsisupport.gov.au/reporting/Structure-of-the-Field-of-Education-Classification-Support)

4. PROCEDURE CONTENT

As per the [Academic Staff Qualifications or Equivalent Experience Policy](#), the Executive Dean or Head of Teaching Area, or nominee, is required to ensure the employment of appropriately qualified and experienced Staff. This includes ensuring they are equipped to undertake their role and have the ability to demonstrate equivalent, relevant and current academic, professional, practice-based, or lived cultural experience prior to any offer of casual, fixed term or ongoing employment being made (including verbal offers), or allocation of duties.

Minimum Expected Requirements for the Qualifications of Staff

- 4.1. Academic Staff shall have the level of qualification and experience commensurate with the academic duties they will be responsible for (see table 1):
 - a. Teaching Delivery – requires professional and practice-based experience, competence in academic practice or experience, and qualification preferably at the same AQF level.
 - b. Teaching Related Duties – requires an applied, high level professional and practice-based experience, high-level of competence or experience in academic practice or working towards academic practice-based qualification, and preferably working towards AQF+1.
 - c. Expert Guest lecturers, specialists or cultural experts providing specialist input to a Unit on an occasional basis (see 4.4).

Table 1: Classification of Teaching Duties and Academic Activities

Type of Duty	Academic Activity
Teaching Delivery	Lecturing – specialist
	Tutoring
	Online Facilitation / Online Tutoring
	Demonstration
Teaching Related Duties	Unit Marking
	Unit Writing
	Unit Coordinating

Principles for the Assessment of Equivalence

- 4.2. The following principles apply when assessing academic, professional or practice-based equivalence:

- a. The provision of a high-quality Student experience should be at the forefront of all decisions regarding the qualifications, experience and equivalence of an Academic Staff member and their ability to deliver or develop ECU's curriculum.
- b. Academic Staff should typically have an academic qualification at least equivalent to the AQF level of the Course of study to be taught or be working towards completion of that level of qualification.
- c. Staff qualifications should be in a related discipline (or a cognate discipline) as the Course content and materials being taught.
- d. Consideration should be given to the relevance of all applicable experience to the role they are being appointed, including teaching experience (such as teaching at lower AQF levels, conducting professional development seminars, public lectures), scholarship and professional practice.
- e. To encourage new Academic Staff entering the profession without experience in academic practice, consideration may be given to concurrent completion of ECU's Graduate Certificate in Academic Practice Program in addition to the mandatory [Professional Development for Teaching Staff](#) requirements as part of the onboarding process, and supervision as per 4.2g.
- f. Any specific requirements relating to Professional Accreditation and /or External Recognition standards, must be considered when assessing the suitability of Academic Staff for academic duties.
- g. Where Academic Staff without appropriate academic qualifications or experience are required to perform Teaching Related Duties (as indicated in Table 1), suitable arrangements **must** be put in place for supervision by an academic staff member with appropriate qualifications.

Equivalency Criteria

- 4.3. The following table (Table 2) provides guidance for demonstrating professional equivalence experience for Academic Staff responsible for Teaching Related Duties:

Table 2: Required Qualifications or Equivalency

AQF level to be delivered	Required AQF qualification in relevant discipline	Considerations for equivalency when AQF+1 is not met
AQF level 5 – Diploma	AQF level 6 - Advanced Diploma	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. AQF level 5 in a related discipline b. Current professional membership or registration to practice (where applicable) <p>and an appropriate combination of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> c. Current or recent discipline knowledge/practice, specifically: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 years relevant professional experience within the last 5 years • Leadership or management of research acknowledged by peers

AQF level to be delivered	Required AQF qualification in relevant discipline	Considerations for equivalency when AQF+1 is not met
		<p>d. Knowledge and experience in contemporary teaching, learning and assessment principles relevant to the role, specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A teaching-focussed qualification • Teaching experience • Current or recent membership of an Academic Board or other formal academic governance committees • Leadership in development of academic standards relevant to the discipline, unit field or unit • engagement with peer review and quality assurance (internal or external) <p>e. A formal qualification in the same (or a cognate) discipline relevant to the role, specifically: Completion of at least two-thirds of a relevant AQF 6 or higher Course</p>
AQF level 6 – Advanced Diploma / Associate Degree	AQF level 7 - Bachelor Degree	<p>a. AQF level 6 in a related discipline</p> <p>b. Current professional membership or registration to practice (where applicable)</p> <p>and an appropriate combination of:</p> <p>c. Current or recent discipline knowledge/practice, specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 years relevant professional experience within the last 5 years • Leadership or management of research acknowledged by peers <p>d. Knowledge and experience in contemporary teaching, learning and assessment principles relevant to the role, specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A teaching-focussed qualification • Teaching experience • Current or recent membership of an Academic Board or other formal academic governance committees • Leadership in development of academic standards relevant to the discipline, unit field or unit

AQF level to be delivered	Required AQF qualification in relevant discipline	Considerations for equivalency when AQF+1 is not met
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> engagement with peer review and quality assurance (internal or external) <p>e. A formal qualification in the same (or a cognate) discipline relevant to the role, specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completion of at least two-thirds of a relevant AQF 7 or higher Course
AQF 7 – Bachelor Degree	AQF level 8 - Honours Graduate Certificate Graduate Diploma	<p>a. AQF level 7 in a related discipline</p> <p>b. Current professional membership or registration to practice (where applicable)</p> <p>and an appropriate combination of:</p> <p>c. Current or recent discipline knowledge/practice, specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least three years of relevant professional, creative or other practice-based experience in a role(s) requiring advanced knowledge, highly developed skills and independent planning and management of people, processes and/or projects. <p>d. Knowledge and experience in contemporary teaching, learning and assessment principles relevant to the role, specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A teaching-focussed qualification At least three years of teaching experience in pre-tertiary Schools, Community and/or Vocational Education settings. Current or recent membership of an Academic Board or other formal academic governance committees Leadership in development of academic standards relevant to the discipline, unit field or unit engagement with peer review and quality assurance (internal or external) <p>e. A formal qualification in the same (or a cognate) discipline relevant to the role, specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completion of at least two-thirds of a relevant AQF level 8 or higher Course

AQF level to be delivered	Required AQF qualification in relevant discipline	Considerations for equivalency when AQF+1 is not met
AQF 8 – Honours Graduate Certificate Graduate Diploma	AQF level 9 - Master's by research or coursework	<p>a. AQF level 8 in a related discipline</p> <p>b. Current professional membership or registration to practice (where applicable)</p> <p>and an appropriate combination of:</p> <p>c. Current or recent discipline knowledge/practice, specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least five years of relevant professional, creative or other practice-based experience in a role(s) requiring advanced knowledge, highly developed skills and independent planning and management of people, processes and/or projects. At least five years of relevant work experience employed at the management or senior management level. Be currently research active; have published academic papers or presented refereed papers at international or national conferences over the past 5 years (min number to be determined by Schools) <p>d. Knowledge and experience in contemporary teaching, learning and assessment principles relevant to the role, specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A teaching-focussed qualification At least five years of teaching experience in undergraduate settings. Current or recent membership of an Academic Board or other formal academic governance committees Leadership in development of academic standards relevant to the discipline, unit field or unit engagement with peer review and quality assurance (internal or external) <p>e. A formal qualification in the same (or a cognate) discipline relevant to the role, specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completion of at least two-thirds of a relevant AQF level 9 or higher Course

AQF level to be delivered	Required AQF qualification in relevant discipline	Considerations for equivalency when AQF+1 is not met
AQF 9 - Master's Degree (Coursework)	AQF level 10 - Doctorate by research or coursework	<p>a. AQF level 9 in a related discipline</p> <p>b. Current professional membership or registration to practice (where applicable)</p> <p>and an appropriate combination of:</p> <p>c. Current or recent discipline knowledge/practice, specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least five years of relevant professional, creative or other practice-based experience in a role(s) requiring advanced knowledge, highly developed skills and independent planning and management of people, processes and/or projects. At least five years of relevant work experience employed at the management or senior management level. Be currently research active; have published academic papers or presented refereed papers presented at international or national conferences over the past 5 years (min number to be determined by Schools) Fellowship of a nationally recognised professional/vocational body requiring advanced extensive work experience, professional standing and ongoing professional development <p>d. Knowledge and experience in contemporary teaching, learning and assessment principles relevant to the role, specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A teaching-focussed qualification At least five years of teaching experience in undergraduate settings. Current or recent membership of an Academic Board or other formal academic governance committees Leadership in development of academic standards relevant to the discipline, unit field or unit engagement with peer review and quality assurance (internal or external) <p>e. A formal qualification in the same (or a cognate) discipline relevant to the role, specifically:</p>

AQF level to be delivered	Required AQF qualification in relevant discipline	Considerations for equivalency when AQF+1 is not met
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completion of at least two-thirds of a relevant AQF level 10 Course
AQF level 9 - Master's Degree (Research)	AQF level 10 - Doctorate by research	Please refer to the following document Guideline: HDR Supervision
AQF 10 - HDR Training (Supervision)	AQF level 10 - Doctorate by research	

4.4. Teaching Delivery, as outlined in Table 1, requires the following qualification or equivalent experience:

Required AQF level in relevant discipline	Considerations for equivalency when AQF+1 is not met
A qualification in a relevant discipline at least one AQF level higher than the Unit to be delivered	<p>a. A qualification or the equivalent of a qualification in a relevant discipline at the same level as the unit and in receipt of professional development support and supervision that assures high quality teaching</p> <p>OR</p> <p>b. Demonstrated achievement of the learning outcomes for the unit(s) being taught to an exceptional level (D or HD), and in receipt of professional development support and supervision that assures high quality teaching. This includes Doctoral candidates teaching in their area of study.</p>

4.5. Expert Guest Lecturers, specialists and cultural experts may be appointed to provide distinctive expertise in teaching activities. They are appointed at the discretion of the Executive Dean of the School or Teaching Area, or nominee, and do not require a minimum qualification. The decision of the Executive Dean of the School or Teaching Area, or nominee is final.

Required Evidence

4.6. Evidence is required to verify the equivalent academic, professional or practice-based experience, and this may include:

- Leadership in the development of professional standards.
- Performing in a role that requires high order judgment and the provision of expert advice, or roles at a senior level.
- Managing significant projects in the field.

- Testimonials, awards or other recognition that acknowledges leadership or expertise in the Field of Education.
- Contributions in the Field of Education through participation in advisory boards and professional networks.
- Peer reviewed publications in the Field of Education.
- Other publications such as creative works, books and reports.
- Leadership or management of research acknowledged by peers.

Record-Keeping

- 4.7. Records of a determination must:
- a. Be made by the Executive Dean or Head of Teaching Area, or nominee, must maintain and include the Academic Role at the AQF level the staff member can perform and the required evidence on which the determination was based (as set out in this procedure).
 - b. The determination must be recorded on the [ECU approved template](#).
 - c. A copy of these documents must be retained by the within the School or Teaching Area and stored in accordance with the University's [Records Management Policy](#).

5. ACCOUNTABILITIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Procedure Owner is Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) and has overall responsibility for the content of these procedures and their operation.

The Manager, Academic Quality and Standards is responsible for currency of information and provision of advice relating to these procedures.

6. RELATED DOCUMENTS

Legislation

[Australian Qualifications Framework](#)
[Higher Education Standards Framework \(Threshold Standards\) 2015](#)

Policies

[ECU Enterprise Agreement 2022](#)
[Equivalent Experience for Academic Staff Qualifications](#)
[Supervision of Students Undertaking Higher Degrees by Research](#)

Procedures

[Academic Staff Qualifications for Vocational Education and Training](#)

Operational Documents

[Professional Equivalence Form](#)

7. CONTACT INFORMATION

For queries relating to this document please contact:

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8. APPROVAL HISTORY

Procedure approved by:	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education)
Date procedure first approved:	March 2018
Date last modified:	February 2025
Revision history:	<p>February 2025:</p> <p>Procedure title changed to align with overarching policy title change. Procedure content revised to clarify what professional experience is. Principles for assessment of professional experience added, along with record keeping requirements. Minimum qualifications table amended to accommodate discipline appropriate judgements.</p>
Next revision due:	December 2028