Academic Staff Qualifications and Professional or Industry Experience Equivalence Policy

Section 1 - Purpose

(1) This purpose of this Policy is to set out the principles and requirements that ensure current and prospective academic staff (continuing, fixed term, contingent continuing and sessional) at the University of Canberra (the University) have appropriate qualifications or professional or industry experience in the relevant field of education to teach or supervise higher degree research (HDR) students.

(2) This Policy ensures the University's current and prospective academic staff, whether employed by the University or other Third-Party Provider, either:

a. are qualified in a relevant discipline at least one Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) level higher than is awarded for the course of study
b. have professional or industry experience equivalent to at least one level higher than is awarded for the course of study they teach into.

(3) For academic staff with overseas qualifications, an advisory assessment may be made about the educational level of an overseas qualification in terms of an Australian qualification on the AQF. For more information, see the Department of Education's qualification assessment.

(4) This Policy ensures quality of education by providing the level and extent of academic oversight and teaching capacity needed to lead students in intellectual inquiry suited to the nature and level of expected learning outcomes, in line with the University's strategic objectives and commitment.

(5) This Policy aligns with Clauses 3.2 and 4.1.2 of the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021.

Section 2 - Scope

(6) This Policy applies to current or prospective academic staff, whether employed by the University or other Third-Party Provider, who:

a. teach students enrolled in coursework units or courses
b. supervise higher degree research students.

(7) The Policy also applies to coursework units in the University's higher degrees by research courses. For further information on the supervision of higher degree research candidates, see the Higher Degree by Research Supervision Policy and Procedure.

Section 3 - Principles

Minimum requirements for teaching and higher degree research supervision

(8) Academic staff will normally have the requisite AQF level qualification in a relevant discipline.

(9) Academic staff must be qualified to at least one level of qualification higher than the course of study being taught (AQF +1) or have equivalent relevant professional or industry experience to teach students at the University, except for staff who are supervising doctoral degrees who must have a doctoral degree or equivalent research experience.

(10) Academic staff who are qualified with AQF +1 or meet the equivalent professional experience of AQF+1 can undertake teaching activities in their relevant disciplines.

(11) Where academic staff do not have the required level of AQF qualifications in a relevant discipline (per clause 9 and 10), they can demonstrate that they have a combination of AQF qualifications and relevant experience, as detailed in the Academic Staff Qualifications and Professional or Industry Experience Equivalence Procedure.

(12) Academic staff who may not fully meet the standard for knowledge, skills and qualification or experience required for teaching or supervision (per clause 11) may still undertake teaching activities but must have their teaching guided and overseen by academic staff who meet the requirements of the Threshold Standards 2021 and this Policy.

(13) If an academic staff member is requested to teach in a course or unit at a higher AQF level than they were employed to teach, the Faculty must re-evaluate if that academic staff member meets the minimum requirements for teaching at that AQF level.

(14) If in making the evaluation (per clause 13) the academic staff member meets the minimum requirements through a combination of qualifications and experience, the Faculty must provide an additional Professional or Industry Experience Equivalence Form to P&C for uploading to the University Human Resources System. The Professional or Industry Experience Equivalence Form does not need to be completed if the academic staff member has an AQF qualification one level above the course being taught.

Co-taught units

(15) Where units are co-taught, the qualification requirements of academic staff will relate to the highest-level course in which any student in the unit is enrolled.

Assessment

(16) Academic staff who are assessed on a combination of formal qualifications and experience must have formal qualifications to at least the same AQF level as that being taught.

(17) The Executive Dean is responsible for assessing and approving continuing, fixed-term and contingent continuing academic staff qualifications and their equivalent professional or industry experience.

(18) The Head of School or equivalent is responsible for assessing and approving sessional academic staff qualifications and their equivalent professional or industry experience.

(19) All decisions on determining the equivalence of professional or industry experience and qualifications, including exceptions, will be made according to the Academic Staff Qualifications and Professional or Industry Experience Equivalence Procedure.

(20) Where required, the relevant faculty or business unit will submit a completed Professional or Industry Experience Equivalence Form to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (DVC) for approval. This must occur as part of offer approval in the

University Human Resource system. For more information see Academic Staff Qualifications and Professional or Industry Experience Equivalence Procedure.

(21) In determining equivalence of professional or industry experience, the University recognises that some disciplines which are professionally focused, highly specialised or have teachers undergoing training require a combination of registration, experience and academic qualifications to achieve expert-level professional standards. Therefore, the University acknowledges that some flexibility is needed to apply this Policy to maintain the quality of education.

Professional or industry experience

(22) Professional or industry experience must be current and relevant to the area being taught and will only be used to assess one AQF level above that being taught.

(23) Professional or Industry experience should be aligned to the field of education relevant to the course being taught.

(24) Academic staff must maintain the currency and relevancy of their qualifications and professional or industry experience through continual professional development to maintain the quality of education at the University and enable them to make the transition to academic teaching successfully.

(25) Academic staff plan and document how they maintain the currency and relevancy of their qualifications and professional or industry experience via activities such as performance and development planning (PDP), internal and external professional development and mentoring.

Records

(26) All equivalency assessments for all academic staff employed at the University must be documented and recorded.

(27) Records of all equivalency assessments are to be maintained by P&C under the Records and Information Management Policy and the DITM and Records Management Policy Manual.

Section 4 - Responsibilities

Who	Responsibilities
Deans	• Submitting documentary evidence of academic staff work history, academic qualifications and any other information relevant to applying the Policy, for consideration by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (DVC). This is needed when: ◦ staff members are first employed; and ◦ staff members are requested to teach in a course or unit at a higher AQF level than they were initially employed for. • Followig up approved exceptions with People & Culture (P&C) for completion of employment contracts.
Deputy Vice-Chancellor (DVC)	• Ensuring that equivalence has been approved at the faculty level as part of approving employment offers to academic staff in the University Human Resource system.
People & Culture (P&C)	• Retaining records of staff working history and academic qualifications with the approved reasons for exceptions, within personnel files. • Maintaining a record of all equivalency assessments for qualifications and professional or industry experience, applied to academic staff who do and do not meet the requirements. • Maintaining the above records in the HR Online system.

Section 5 - Procedure

(28) Refer to the Academic Staff Qualifications and Professional or Industry Experience Equivalence Procedure.

Section 6 - Definitions

TERM	DEFINITION
Academic Staff	Continuing, fixed term, contingent continuing and sessional staff.
Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)	The national policy for regulated academic qualifications in Australian education and training. It incorporates the quality assured academic qualifications from each education and training sector into a single comprehensive national academic qualifications framework.
Equivalency	Professional or industry experience instead of Australian Qualifications Framework qualifications.
Professional or Industry Experience	Experience obtained through practice of a profession, including teaching experience, professional practice, scholarship and from which the professional competency, skills, knowledge and learning outcomes achieved can be assessed. Or industry experience in the relevant field including technical and/or leadership competencies, skills and knowledge.
Qualification	A formal record awarded at the completion of successful study.
Third-Party Provider	A legally established entity separate from the University of Canberra (although it may be an entity controlled by the University) with which the University has a legal relationship for the purposes of delivering University accredited units and courses to students.

Status and Details

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