

Determining equivalence of professional experience to academic qualifications - Operational Policy

1. Purpose of policy

1.1 To ensure that academic staff appointed to teach and assess students enrolled in coursework programs at the University are qualified to an appropriate level in the relevant discipline, as required by legislation.

2. Policy scope and application

2.1 This policy applies to all current and prospective academic staff, including casual academic staff, who are teaching and assessing students enrolled in coursework programs and courses, including coursework programs and courses delivered by a third-party provider.

2.2 This policy does not apply to guest lecturers or staff involved in professional placement courses. Academic staff supervising HDR students are subject to the Higher Degree by Research – Academic Policy and Procedures.

3. Definitions

Please refer to the University's Glossary of Terms for policies and procedures. Terms and definitions identified below are specific to this policy:

Professional experience means 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.

4. Policy Statement

4.1 The objective of this policy is to define how an academic member of staff can provide equivalence of qualifications through professional experience.

5. Principles

5.1 Academic staff teaching students enrolled in coursework programs will normally have a qualification at least one Australian Qualification Framework (AQF) qualification level higher than the program of study being taught.

5.2 A Bachelor degree is generally the minimum requirement to teach coursework programs at the University.

5.3 Deans of School are responsible for assessing and approving academic staff member qualifications and their equivalent professional experience.

5.4 In assessing professional equivalence to teach in coursework programs, the following should be considered:

- (a) teaching experience, scholarship activity and range of professional experience;
- (b) minimum requirement for academic qualifications; and
- (c) any specific criteria for assessing equivalence at each AQF level.

5.5 In making decisions on the determination of equivalence of experience, the University acknowledges that in some areas that are professionally focussed, developing academic disciplines, or highly specialist programs, that some flexibility with regard to the application of the policy may be required. However, circumstances requiring flexible application of the policy, must not curb the intent and general application of the policy.

APPROVAL AUTHORITY

Vice-Chancellor and President

RESPONSIBLE EXECUTIVE MEMBER

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)

DESIGNATED OFFICER

Director, People and Culture

FIRST APPROVED

26 October 2017

LAST AMENDED

28 August 2024

REVIEW DATE

26 October 2027

STATUS

Active

5.6 All decisions on determining the equivalence of professional experience to academic qualifications will be made in accordance with Appendix A.

5.7 All decisions made based on equivalence require a record of assessment and records are to be maintained by the Schools in accordance with the Information Management Framework – Governing Policy.

6. Authorities/Responsibilities

6.1 The following authorities/responsibilities are delegated under this policy:

ACTIVITY	UNIVERSITY OFFICER/COMMITTEE
Responsible for assessing and approving academic staff member qualifications and their equivalent professional experience.	Deans of School

END of Policy

Appendix A - Assessment of equivalence of professional experience to academic qualifications

Although academic staff will normally have the requisite level of qualification, without the need to rely on professional experience to demonstrate equivalence, it is recognised that some disciplines require a combination of registration, experience and qualifications to achieve expert level professional standards.

Academic staff who are assessed on a combination of formal qualifications and professional experience should have formal qualifications to at least the same level as that being taught. Professional experience will only be used to assess one Qualification Standards level above that being taught and the experience must be current and relevant to the area being taught.

The criteria below are considered minimum requirements and Schools may require additional evidence or standards, as appropriate for different disciplines of study. Assessment outcomes should also be used for professional development plans for example supervision for teaching at appropriate levels.

COURSE AQF QUALIFICATION LEVEL BEING TAUGHT/ASSESSED	MINIMUM AQF QUALIFICATIONS OF STAFF	PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE EQUIVALENCE CRITERIA
Level 6 – Associate Degree, Advanced Diploma	Level 7 - Bachelor Degree in relevant area	No equivalence recognised. Except for special circumstance, the minimum qualification level to teach any USC student is a Bachelor Degree.
Level 7 – Bachelor Degree	Level 8 - Bachelor Honours Degree, Graduate Certificate, Graduate Diploma	<p>AQF Level 7 qualification (Bachelor degree) and current registration or equivalent to practice within the relevant profession (if relevant)</p> <p>PLUS</p> <p>EITHER:</p> <p>3 years relevant professional experience in the last 5 years</p> <p>OR</p> <p>enrolment in a AQF Level 8 or above program plus some relevant professional experience, together totalling 3 years</p>
Level 8 – Bachelor Honours Degree, Graduate Certificate, Graduate Diploma	Level 9 - Masters degree	<p>AQF Level 8 qualification and current registration or equivalent to practice within the relevant profession (if relevant)</p> <p>PLUS</p> <p>EITHER:</p>

Level 9 – Masters by coursework	Level 10 - Doctorate	<p>5 years relevant professional experience in the last 10 years</p> <p>OR</p> <p>enrolment in a relevant AQF Level 9 (Masters) or above program plus some relevant professional experience, together totalling 5 years.</p> <p>AQF Level 9 qualification and current registration or equivalent to practice within the relevant profession (if relevant)</p> <p>PLUS</p> <p>EITHER:</p> <p>5 years relevant professional experience in the last 10 years</p> <p>OR</p> <p>enrolment in a relevant AQF level 10 (doctoral) or above program plus some relevant professional experience together totalling 5 years</p>
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RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Academic Position Classification - Guidelines
- Recruitment, Selection and Appointment - Operational Policy

RELATED LEGISLATION / STANDARDS

- Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) Act 2011 (Cth)
- Australian Qualifications Framework
- Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 (Cth)