



# Equivalence of Academic Staff Qualifications Policy and Procedure

## Purpose

1. The Australian International Institute of Higher Education ('the Institute') is committed to upholding academic quality in its courses and ensuring alignment with the *Higher Education Standards Framework 2021 (HESF 2021)* and the *Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)*.
2. This Policy and Procedure outlines the framework under which the Institute:
  - a) sets minimum qualifications for the recruitment of academic staff
  - b) assesses the equivalency of professional experience with academic qualifications, where an applicant does not possess the usual minimum qualifications as defined in the *HESF 2021*
  - c) establishes appropriate supervision arrangements for staff who are recruited on the basis of equivalency.
3. This Policy should be read in conjunction with the Institute's *Human Resources Management Policy and Procedure*, which outlines the processes for recruitment of both academic and non-academic staff.

## Scope

4. This Policy and Procedure apply to:
  - a) all existing and prospective staff of the Institute whether full-time, part-time, sessional or contract.

## Definitions

5. For the purposes of this Policy and Procedure:
  - a) **Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)** is the national policy for regulated qualifications in Australian education which incorporates the qualifications from each education sector and provides for national recognition and a consistent understanding of what defines each qualification type.

## Policy

### Principles

6. The Institute recognises that:
  - a) both academic and broader credentials of its academic staff are critical in assuring the quality of its courses
  - b) relevant professional skills may complement academic qualifications when determining the suitability of an individual to teach in its courses and support the provision of a career-oriented learning environment.
7. Academic staff candidates are assessed in relation to their knowledge, teaching capability and qualifications as relevant to the specific course for which they are being considered to teach.



8. To ensure that all academic staff are appropriately qualified for their roles the following criteria should normally be met by applicants:
  - a) hold knowledge of contemporary developments in a relevant discipline or field, which is informed by continuing scholarship or research or advances in practice
  - b) have skills in contemporary teaching, learning and assessment principles relevant to the discipline, role, modes of delivery and needs of the Institute's student cohorts
  - c) hold a qualification in a relevant discipline at least one level higher than is awarded for the course of study, or equivalent relevant academic or professional or practice-based experience and expertise.
9. The Institute may recognise equivalent experience in place of a higher education qualification only where this satisfies a particular educational need of the course that cannot reasonably be addressed in other ways. This may only occur where the candidate's experience demonstrates achievements equivalent or superior to the otherwise required qualification.
10. Equivalent experience must be current and directly relevant to the course of study.
11. Academic staff candidates who are assessed on a combination of qualifications and professional experience must have at least an academic qualification at the same AQF level as the course of study being taught.
12. Academic staff teaching specialised components of a course who may not fully meet the above requirements will have their teaching guided and overseen by staff who meet the requirements. The Institute may also consider implementing a specific professional development plan or mentoring or coaching program to assist staff in successfully transitioning to academic teaching at the desired level.

## **Procedure**

### **Assessing equivalence**

13. Academic staff are recruited under the processes outlined in the *Human Resources Management Policy and Procedure*.
14. Where a potential academic staff member is deemed to have valuable appropriate expertise but does not meet the minimum requirements as outlined in this Policy, then an assessment of equivalence must be made and authorised prior to appointment.
15. In these circumstances the Chair of the recruitment panel is responsible for submitting an assessment of professional equivalence in consultation with the relevant Course Coordinator where they are not the Chair. The assessment is submitted to the Academic Dean with relevant evidence to accompany the recommendation to appoint. Where the Academic Dean is the Chair the recommendation must be submitted to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO).
16. The Academic Dean, or CEO as appropriate, must authorise the assessment of professional equivalence and approve any required supervision or professional development arrangements for the employee.

### **Evidence of equivalence**

17. The Institute requires documentary evidence of the satisfaction of these requirements. The experience being assessed must include evidence within the last five years.
18. Equivalent experience can be demonstrated by:



- a) leadership in the development of professional standards
- b) performing in a role that requires high-order judgement and the provision of expert advice, or roles at a senior level
- c) managing significant projects in a relevant field of education
- d) testimonials, awards or other recognition that acknowledges leadership or expertise in a relevant field of education
- e) contributions in the field of education through participation in advisory boards and professional networks
- f) peer-reviewed publications in the field of education
- g) other publications such as books and reports
- h) leadership or management of research acknowledged by peers.

### Monitoring

- 19. The Institute collects data on the recruitment of academic staff, including by type of employment (e.g. casual staff). Student feedback on the Institute's academic staff is sought at the end of each study period.
- 20. The Institute uses the collected data to monitor trends and emerging issues.
- 21. The Institute will improve its academic workforce profile and assessment and recruitment processes based on the collected data.
- 22. The Academic Board and Governing Council receive an annual report of appointments of staff under this Policy.

### Records

- 23. Appropriate records must be kept for all staff for whom an assessment of professional equivalence has been conducted. This includes authorisations of equivalence assessments and any accompanying evidence, together with information about any professional development or mentoring arrangements that have been put in place.

### Appeals

- 24. Any potential or existing staff member who wishes to appeal any decision made under this Policy and Procedure may do so under the Appeal provisions in the *Human Resources Management Policy and Procedure*.

### Responsibilities

- a) The Governing Council is responsible for reviewing the annual report of all staff appointments.
- 25. The Academic Board is responsible for:
  - a) approving academic staff position descriptions
  - b) overseeing the establishment of an adequate academic workforce profile.
- 26. The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for:
  - a) participating in the assessment of academic staff qualifications
  - b) in consultation with the Academic Dean, providing reports to the Academic Board regarding academic staff qualifications when necessary.
- 27. The Academic Dean is responsible for:
  - a) authorising assessments of equivalent experience and ensuring consistency over time



- b) approving any required supervision or professional development arrangements.
- 28. The Chair of the recruitment panel is responsible for ensuring that all appropriate procedures have been observed in the recruitment of academic staff and that all appropriate records are kept.
- 29. Course Coordinators are responsible for:
  - a) advising on the adequacy of professional equivalence in respect of a particular field of education, course, or subject
  - b) incorporating the outcomes of the assessment of professional equivalence into academic staff professional development plans
  - c) reporting to the Academic Dean on compliance with this Policy for all academic staff they supervise.
- 30. All academic staff are responsible for maintaining their qualifications and credentials as required by the Institute.



## Associated information

<b>Approving body</b>	Academic Board
<b>Date approved</b>	28 September 2020
<b>Date of effect</b>	Commencement of operation
<b>Scheduled review</b>	Two years from when policy commences
<b>Current version approval date</b>	30/07/2024
<b>Next review date</b>	30/07/2026
<b>Policy owner</b>	Academic Dean
<b>Policy contact</b>	Academic Dean
<b>Related AIIHE Documents</b>	Human Resources Management Policy and Procedure Scholarly Activity Policy and Procedure AIIHE Workforce Plan
<b>Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 (Cth)</b>	B1.1 'Institute of Higher Education' Category Standard 3.2, ss 2-4
<b>Other related external instruments/documents</b>	<b>Related Legislation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011 (Cth)</li></ul> <b>Good Practice Documents</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>TEQSA Guidance Note: Staffing, Learning Resources and Educational Support, Version 1.3</li><li>TEQSA Guidance Note: Determining Equivalence of Professional Experience and Academic Qualifications, Version 2.2</li></ul>

## Document history

Version	Author	Changes	Approval Date
1.0	Not applicable	Original version	28 September 2020
1.1	Compliance Officer	Reviewed to align with the HESF 2021, responsibilities were clarified and updated, and the footer was updated with current addresses.	30 July 2024

*N.B. The document is uncontrolled when printed! The current version of this document is maintained on the AIIHE website at [www.aiihe.edu.au](http://www.aiihe.edu.au).*