



Policy for the determination of equivalence of professional experience to academic qualifications

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1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 This policy and procedure outlines the processes and criteria for determining professional experience equivalence of academic staff delivering Polytechnic Institute Australia's (PIA) higher education qualifications.
- 1.2 This policy ensures that PIA complies with Higher Education Standards Framework 3.2.3c for academic staff to be appropriately qualified – at a minimum, at least one Australian Qualification Framework (AQF) level above the highest level of the qualification (not lower nested qualifications) or with equivalent professional experience.
- 1.3 Decisions related to professional experience equivalence will be made by the PIA Dean in consultation with Heads of Discipline, and in cases which are exceptions to this Policy with the Academic Board.

2 SCOPE

- 2.1 This policy and procedure apply to all PIA staff involved in the design, development, delivery and evaluation of higher education qualifications accredited to PIA.

3 POLICY STATEMENT

- 3.1 Academic staff will normally have the requisite level of qualification, without the need to rely on professional experience to demonstrate equivalence.
- 3.2 In certain circumstances it is recognised that some discipline areas require a combination of experience and qualifications to achieve expert-level professional standards expected by industry of a graduate of the PIA courses.
- 3.3 Academic staff who are assessed on a combination of formal qualifications and professional experience must have formal qualifications to at least the same level as being taught.
- 3.4 Professional experience will only be used to assess one AQF level above that being taught.
- 3.5 Professional experience must be current, within the past 5 years, and related to the discipline area.
- 3.6 Professional experience must give those staff the skills, knowledge and capacity to apply skills and knowledge equivalent to an AQF qualification one level above the AQF qualification level being taught.

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3.7 There may be special circumstances not covered by these guidelines. In such cases, an academically defensible position must be made for each individual staff member and tabled at the next meeting of the Academic Board.

3.8 Criteria for determining equivalency of professional experience

The table below describes the minimum AQF requirements to teach a PIA course of study, and the professional experience deemed equivalent where the lecturer/teacher does not hold the requisite AQF level qualification.

AQF level being taught	Minimum qualification required by HESF3.2.3c and the AQF	Professional experience equivalent
AQF 7 Bachelor	AQF 8 Honours Graduate Certificate Graduate Diploma	<p>AQF 7 Bachelor qualification AND current registration to practise where relevant (for example, CPA, CA for accounting, LPAB for law and current State Authority lawyer or barrister practicing certificates)</p> <p>PLUS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A minimum of 5 years from the past 7, professional experience related the learning outcomes of the unit(s) to be taught (for example, Human Resource experience that relates to the learning outcomes of Human Resource Management). Professional Experience will be expected at middle management levels of an organisation in an area related to the learning outcomes of what the person will teach. Senior management level experience is highly regarded. <p>AND/OR</p> <p>Enrolment in a relevant AQF level 8 or 9 qualification, plus professional experience related to the learning outcomes of what is being taught in 5 years of the past 7 years.</p> <p>For all staff assessed under this policy, the following will also be taken into account:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professional membership at a level higher than ordinary full member entry level and evidence of participation in a 'Continuing Professional Development' program will be expected where such a program exists – for example, Australian Human Resource Institute (AHRI), Australian Marketing Institute (AMI), Australian Institute of Management (AIM), Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD). Publications in trade/industry and/or academic publications related to the area of teaching will also be considered. Teaching (and professional) experience, including at lower AQF levels.
AQF 8 Graduate Certificate	AQF 9 Masters	AQF 8 qualification AND current registration to practise where relevant (for example, CPA, CA for accounting, LPAB for law

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<p>Graduate Diploma</p>		<p>and current State Authority lawyer or barrister practicing certificates</p> <p>PLUS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A minimum of 5 years from the past 7, professional experience related to the learning outcomes of the unit(s) to be taught (for example, Human Resource experience that relates to the learning outcomes of Human Resource Management). • Professional Experience will be expected at middle management levels of an organisation in an area related to the learning outcomes of what the person will teach. Senior management level experience is highly regarded. <p>AND/OR</p> <p>Enrolment in a relevant AQF 9 or 10 qualification, plus professional experience at middle or senior management levels of an organisation in an area related to the learning outcomes of what the person will teach.</p> <p>For all staff assessed under this policy, the following will also be taken into account:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional membership at a level higher than ordinary full member entry level and evidence of participation in a 'Continuing Professional Development' program will be expected where such a program exists – for example, Australian Human Resource Institute (AHRI), Australian Marketing Institute (AMI), Australian Institute of Management (AIM), Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD). • Publications in trade/industry and/or academic publications related to the area of teaching will also be considered. • Teaching (and professional) experience, including at lower AQF levels.
<p>AQF 9 Master</p>	<p>AQF 10 Doctorate</p>	<p>AQF 9 qualification AND current registration to practise where relevant (for example, FCPA, FCA for accounting, LPAB for law and current State Authority (lawyer) or Barrister practicing certificates</p> <p>PLUS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A minimum of 5 years from the past 7, professional experience related to the learning outcomes of the unit(s) to be taught (for example, Human Resource experience related to the learning outcomes of Human Resource Management). • Professional Experience will be expected at middle to senior management levels of an organisation in an area related to the learning outcomes of what the person will teach. Senior management level experience is highly regarded. <p>AND/OR</p>



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		<p>Enrolment in a relevant AQF level 10 qualification, plus professional experience related to the learning outcomes of what is being taught in 5 years of the past 7 years.</p> <p>For all staff assessed under this policy, the following will also be taken into account:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional membership at a level higher than ordinary full member entry level and evidence of participation in a 'Continuing Professional Development' program will be expected where such a program exists – for example, Australian Human Resource Institute (AHRI), Australian Marketing Institute (AMI), Australian Institute of Management (AIM), Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD). • Publications in trade/industry and/or academic publications related to the area of teaching will also be considered. • Teaching (and professional) experience, including at lower AQF levels.
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3.9 Exceptions

At times the following exceptions will be accepted

- Occasional guest lecturers will be exempt for the requirement to hold a qualification of one AQF level above, but must be able to bring a level of knowledge and expertise which will value add to the teaching of the relevant topic areas.
- In cases not covered by these guidelines, the principles of Recognition of Prior Learning should be applied and documentation should demonstrate the appropriate level of skills and knowledge appropriate for the AQF level. Where such cases occur, for example, less than equivalent qualifications, the Dean will assess against the criteria set out in 7.3 below.

4 PROCEDURE

- 4.1 The Heads of discipline will advise the Dean of the need to employ an academic staff member under these guidelines.
- 4.2 The Dean must be satisfied that the professional experience meets the required equivalent level of skills, attitudes and knowledge to undertake teaching duties, as specified in the AQF (2013) and subsequent addendum for AQF 9.
- 4.3 In reviewing a case, the Dean may assess a combination of broader experience and qualification(s) such as the following:
- a. Research and/or creative work/projects at an advanced level;
 - b. Publications, presentations and conference participation;
 - c. Experience outside tertiary education in industry, business, government or employment; and
 - d. Leadership in local, state or national advisory bodies, and/or community organisations.
- 4.4 The Dean will provide PIA HR details of how each individual academic staff member was assessed as meeting these guidelines.

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- 4.5 The Dean will maintain appropriate records of approved AQF equivalences to ensure PIA meets its reporting responsibilities. The records will show:
- Details of the date of nomination, staff name, teaching discipline, how each staff member was assessed as equivalent and which general category of equivalence against which a staff member was assessed, the name of the assessor and the name of who assesses and endorses equivalence.
 - Details of special circumstances or exceptions to the general principles outlined in this Policy and how the equivalence was assessed.
- 4.6 The Dean must seek the approval of the Academic Board for exceptions to these guidelines. Any case submitted for approval must be evidence-based and document how the appropriate level of skills and knowledge and the application of skills and knowledge, as specified in the AQF has been met.
- 4.7 Reports on teaching staff employed based on these guidelines will be provided to the Academic Board for review.

5 RESPONSIBILITIES

- 5.1 With the assistance of the Dean, the Academic Board is responsible for monitoring the implementation and regular reporting on the outcomes of these guidelines.
- 5.2 The Dean has overall responsibility for the effective administration and implementation of these guidelines.
- 5.3 All academic staff within PIA need to be aware of their responsibility to comply with these guidelines.
- 5.4 The guidelines set out in this document do not replace or modify procedures or any other responsibilities which may arise under other higher education provider policies or under statute etc.

6 REPORTING

- 6.1 The Academic Board will monitor the implementation and regular reporting on the outcomes of these guidelines.
- 6.2 This document will be reviewed and updated in line with the PIA improvement framework and in line with changes in the Higher Education Standards Framework and/or the AQF.

7 RECORDS MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 The Dean will maintain all records relevant to administering this policy and procedure.

8 DEFINITIONS

- 8.1 Terms not defined in this document may be in the Institute glossary.

All terms are to be read in accordance with plain English.

Academic Board – responsible for the academic governance of PIA

Academic Staff

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- PIA – refers collectively to the Dean, Discipline Heads, and other academic teaching and academic support staff

AQF qualification – An AQF qualification is a complete accredited program of study leading to a formal qualification

Course – ‘TEQSA interprets ‘the course’ broadly to mean the entire course put forward for accreditation in an ‘opt-out’ model. Therefore, the first year of an opt-out nested bachelor course should be taught by staff with at least an AQF Level 8 qualification (or equivalent) and the first year of an opt-out nested Masters course should be taught by staff with an AQF Level 10 doctorate (or equivalent).’ ([TEQSA Guidance Note: Nested Courses](#), p5)

Professional Experience – includes teaching experience (that is, teaching at lower AQF levels, conducting professional development seminars, giving public lectures), scholarship and professional practice. Examples of evidence to support Professional Experience include: leadership in the development of professional standards; performing in a role that requires high order judgement and the provision of expert advice, or roles have been 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 study through participation in advisory boards and professional networks; peer reviewed publications in the field of study; other publications such as books and reports; leadership or management of research acknowledged by peers. ([TEQSA Guidance Note: Equivalence of professional experience to academic qualifications](#), p2)

Related – cognate or *connected* to what is being taught, a stronger association / connection / relationship between the two aspects (for example, between professional experience and what is being taught – the experience of the person is directly related to the learning outcomes of what is taught) than being relevant (having *reference* to) what is being taught.¹

Teacher – may be used interchangeably to mean - teacher, lecturer, tutor, demonstrator

TEQSA – the [Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency](#).

9 RELATED LEGISLATION AND DOCUMENTS

[Academic Staff Qualifications and Equivalence](#), Deakin University

[Guidelines for Assessing Equivalent Experience](#), Melbourne Students & Learning, University of Melbourne

[Checklist for the Determination of AQF+1 and/or Equivalence of Professional Experience](#), Melbourne Institute of Technology

[Determining equivalence of professional experience to academic qualifications - Managerial Policy](#), University of the Sunshine Coast

[Policy for determining the equivalence of professional experience and academic qualifications](#), Australian Institute of Business

Kaye Bowman, [Background paper for the AQF Council on generic skills](#), March 2010

[TEQSA and the Australian Qualifications Framework – Questions and Answers](#)

[Australian Qualifications Framework](#)

¹ *The Australian Concise Oxford Dictionary*, 4th edition (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2006) pp 265 (cognate), 1191 (related), and 1192 (relevant)



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[Higher Education Standards Framework \(Threshold Standards\) 2021](#)

[Guidance Note: Equivalence of professional experience to academic qualifications](#)

[Guidance Note: Nested Courses of Study](#)

10 FEEDBACK

10.1 Institute staff and students may provide feedback about this document by emailing policy@pia.edu.au

11 APPROVAL AND REVIEW DETAILS

Approval and Review	Details
Approval Authority	Academic Board
Administrator	Dean
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