

Professional Equivalency Policy Version 1.1

1. Purpose

Nexus Institute of Higher Education recognises the importance of both academic qualifications and professional experience in ensuring that academic staff have knowledge of contemporary developments in their field. This Equivalency Policy outlines the procedures and criteria for assessing and approving equivalent professional experience for academic staff who are usually required to hold qualifications one level higher than the course on which they are teaching.

This policy should be read in conjunction with

- Recruitment Policy

2. Scope

This policy applies to all academic staff engaged by Nexus Institute.

The policy does not apply to guest lecturers or staff from partner institutions who supervise work-integrated learning activities and are guided by academic staff.

3. Definitions

Qualification level. The academic level of the qualification, as defined by the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF).

Professional experience. Relevant work experience in the field of study, industry, or discipline related to the academic position.

4. Policy statement

Academic staff members are usually required to hold a relevant qualification one level higher than the course on which they are teaching or equivalent professional experience.

All academic staff must hold relevant qualification at the level of the course on which they are teaching.

Academic staff must demonstrate knowledge of contemporary developments in the field they teach, informed by continuing scholarly activity and skills in teaching, learning and assessment relevant to the needs of their students.

Academic staff who teach at any level of a nested program must be qualified at least one AQF level higher than that being taught, or have equivalent professional experience.

The assessment of professional equivalency will take account of the discipline context and will consider the following criteria when evaluating whether professional experience is equivalent to academic qualifications:

- The nature, depth, breadth and duration of the professional experience.
- The relevance of the professional experience to the academic position and course content.

- Progress towards a relevant higher level qualification.
- Any additional qualifications, certifications, or professional development obtained during the professional experience.
- Evidence of teaching experience and delivering professional development programs.
- Evidence of contributions to the discipline, such as publications, research, or notable achievements, demonstrating the staff member's expertise.
- Evidence of contributions to leadership roles in local, state or national advisory bodies, professional associations and/or community organisations.
- The impact of the professional experience on the academic staff member's ability to fulfill the responsibilities of the position effectively.

Academic staff members have the right to appeal an equivalency decision regarding professional experience.

5. Procedures

The Executive Dean will compare the qualifications and professional experience of applicants for teaching positions against the requirements of the planned teaching assignment before an offer of appointment is made.

The Executive Dean will review teaching appointments made on the basis of professional equivalency each year to ensure that staff are progressing in further study or maintaining the currency of their experience through scholarly activity.

The minimum requirements for demonstrating professional equivalency are shown in the table below.

AQF level to be taught	Qualification usually required	Equivalent professional experience requirements
AQF 5 Diploma	AQF 6	AQF 5 plus at least 5 years relevant full-time professional experience and a record of scholarly activity in a relevant field.
AQF 6 Associate Degree	AQF 7	AQF 6 plus at least 5 years relevant full-time professional experience and a record of scholarly activity in a relevant field.
AQF 7 Bachelor Degree	AQF 9	AQF 8 and a record of scholarly activity in a relevant field OR AQF 7 plus eligibility for professional recognition to practise (where relevant) and at least 5 years relevant full-time professional experience and a record of scholarly activity in a relevant field.

[Note: additional entries in a similar style will be added to the table when Nexus Institute seeks accreditation to deliver Masters degrees.]

6. Roles and responsibilities

The Executive Dean is responsible for approving academic staff member qualifications and the equivalence of their professional experience. The CEO will consider appeals about decisions on professional equivalency.

The Executive Dean is responsible for monitoring the effectiveness and implementation of the policy and its impact on student learning. The Executive Dean will provide an annual report to the Academic Board on the qualifications and experience of academic staff.

7. Related information

- Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021
- TEQSA Guidance note: Determining equivalence of professional experience and academic qualifications (11 October 2017) <https://www.teqsa.gov.au/guides-resources/resources/guidance-notes/guidance-note-determining-equivalence-professional-experience-and-academic-qualifications>
- TEQSA Guidance note: Nested courses of study (13 August 2019) <https://www.teqsa.gov.au/guides-resources/resources/guidance-notes/guidance-note-nested-courses-study>

8. Document control

Category	Academic
HESF Standard	3.2.3
Policy code and name	Professional Equivalency Policy
Policy owner	Executive Dean
Policy approver	Academic Board
Date of approval	23 August 2024
Date of next review	1 March 2027
Change log	Version 0. Original version created on 20 December 2023.
	Version 1. Usual expectation for teaching at AQF7 is a masters degree; clarification in relation to nested courses added on 20 Aug 24.