

# PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE EQUIVALENCE POLICY AND PROCEDURE



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## 1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 This policy and procedure provides a framework for assessing an employee's professional experience for equivalence with the requisite [Australian Qualifications Framework](#) (AQF) level as prescribed by the [Higher Education Standards Framework \(Threshold Standards\) 2021](#) (CwIth) (HESF).
- 1.2 This policy and procedure assists CQUniversity to meet its HESF obligations to provide the level and extent of academic oversight and teaching capacity needed to effectively lead students in intellectual inquiry suited to the learning outcomes in each course of study.

## 2 SCOPE

- 2.1 This policy and procedure applies to current and prospective employees who teach and/or assess higher education courses and units, whether employed by CQUniversity or any of the University's third-party teaching partners.
- 2.2 This policy and procedure does not apply to:
  - occasional guest lecturers
  - employees of institutions where students are undertaking study as outbound mobility programs or partner supervisors of students undertaking placements
  - internships or other forms of work-integrated learning
  - employees involved in supervising candidates enrolled in research higher degrees courses (refer to the [Research Higher Degree Supervision Policy and Procedure](#)), or
  - educators of vocational education and training (VET) courses and units (refer to the [Approved Teaching Qualifications for VET Educators Procedure](#)).

## 3 POLICY STATEMENT

- 3.1 University employees must hold a qualification in a relevant discipline of at least one AQF qualification level above that of the course in which they are teaching.

- 3.2 Where an employee does not hold the requisite qualification, a determination of the employee's professional or practice-based experience and expertise may be used to ensure teaching requirements under the HESF are met.
- 3.3 Employees appointed based on a determination of professional experience equivalence will be supervised by employees who meet the requirement of holding one AQF level qualification higher than the level being taught.
- 3.4 The employee's professional experience must be current and relevant to the discipline/field of study being taught and must be demonstrated by meeting the [criteria](#) outlined in this policy and procedure.
- 3.5 Continuing employees appointed based on a determination of professional experience equivalence are expected to commence study in a relevant higher level AQF qualification within six months of their appointment and must demonstrate satisfactory progress towards completing the qualification within a specified timeframe.
- 3.6 The University acknowledges some emerging or specialist discipline areas may require flexibility in the application of this policy and procedure, but all such cases must comply with the intent of the policy document and be approved by the Vice-President (Academic).

## Criteria

- 3.7 The following table sets out the minimum criteria the University applies when determining an employee's professional experience equivalence. Schools may require additional evidence or standards as appropriate for different disciplines/fields of study.

Higher education qualification AQF level being taught	Required AQF level (in a relevant discipline)	Teaching, research, or professional experience equivalent (in a relevant discipline)
AQF levels 5 and 6 (i.e. Diploma, Advanced Diploma, Associate Degree)	AQF level 7 (i.e. Bachelor Degree)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- AQF level 6 qualification</li> <li>- current membership/registration (or equivalent) to practice within a relevant profession</li> </ul> <p>PLUS, EITHER</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- three years relevant teaching, research and/or professional experience within the last five years</li> <li>OR</li> <li>- enrolment and demonstrated satisfactory progress in a relevant AQF level 7 course.</li> </ul>
AQF level 7 (i.e. Bachelor Degree)	AQF level 8 (i.e. Bachelor Honours Degree, Graduate Certificate, Graduate Diploma)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- AQF level 7 qualification</li> <li>- current membership/registration (or equivalent) to practice within a relevant profession</li> </ul> <p>PLUS, EITHER</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- three years relevant teaching, research and/or professional experience within the last five years</li> <li>OR</li> <li>- enrolment and demonstrated satisfactory progress in a relevant AQF level 8 course and relevant professional experience, together totalling three years.</li> </ul>
AQF level 8 (i.e. Bachelor Honours Degree, Graduate Certificate, Graduate Diploma)	AQF level 9 (i.e. Masters Degree by research or coursework)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- AQF level 8 qualification</li> <li>- current membership/registration to practice within a relevant profession</li> </ul> <p>PLUS EITHER</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- five years relevant teaching, research and/or professional experience within the last 10 years</li> <li>OR</li> <li>- enrolment and demonstrated satisfactory progress in a relevant AQF level 9 course plus relevant professional experience, together totalling three years.</li> </ul>

Higher education qualification AQF level being taught	Required AQF level (in a relevant discipline)	Teaching, research, or professional experience equivalent (in a relevant discipline)
AQF level 9 (i.e.) Masters Degree	AQF level 10 (i.e. Doctoral Degree by research or coursework)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- AQF level 9 qualification</li> <li>- Current membership/registration (or equivalent) to practice within a relevant profession</li> </ul> <p>PLUS, EITHER</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- five years relevant teaching, research and/or professional experience within the last 10 years</li> <li>OR</li> <li>- enrolment and demonstrated satisfactory progress in a relevant AQF level 10 course plus relevant professional experience, together totalling five years.</li> </ul>

## Exceptions

- 3.8 The only exception to these criteria is when engaging employees to teach specialised components of a course, such as expert practitioners or teachers undergoing training, who will teach under the supervision of a University employee with the required AQF level qualifications.
- 3.9 When deciding whether to apply the above criteria in circumstances not covered by this policy and procedure, the Dean of School (or nominee) will recommend a course of action, on a case-by-case basis, to the Vice-President (Academic) for a decision.

## Considerations

- 3.10 When deciding how an employee's equivalent professional experience may be demonstrated, one or more of the following must be applied:
- a) high quality and sustained professional practice in employment, teaching, or performance in the relevant discipline/field of study
  - b) annual professional/clinical development endorsed by the relevant industry body
  - c) regular and recent contributions to the discipline/field of study via quality publications and/or presentations
  - d) recognised influential contributor to the discipline/field of study as evidenced by invitations as a keynote speaker, appointment to an expert panel for the discipline/field of study
  - e) sustained and significant contributions to the discipline/field of study, e.g., one peer-reviewed journal article per year in the preceding five years
  - f) leadership in local, state, or national advisory bodies and/or community organisations, peak discipline, or industry bodies relevant to the teaching discipline/field of study
  - g) experience in managing significant projects in the discipline/field of study, e.g., a consultant who manages projects for medium to large private or public sector organisations
  - h) leadership in the development of professional standards, or working to effect a demonstrable change in creating new practice, in the discipline/field of study, and
  - i) letters of support from recognised peers, testimonials, awards, or other recognition that acknowledges leadership or expertise in the relevant discipline/field of study.

## 4 PROCEDURE

- 4.1 The Dean is responsible for employing appropriately qualified employees and must be satisfied that their professional experience meets the criteria stated above.
- 4.2 The relevant business area will submit a completed [Professional Experience Equivalence Form](#) to the Dean for recommendation, and to the Vice-President (Academic) for approval. Applications for employees to be engaged under an exception must also be processed using this form. The form must include an appropriate supervision plan and evidence of scholarship in their discipline **and** in learning and teaching.

- 4.3 Where applicable, an employee's agreement to commit to scholarship activities and/or a professional development plan may also be included in the form or added as conditions of approval. The supervisor is expected to implement such a plan, which may include team teaching, mentoring or other relevant mechanisms that support the employee to gain experience and levels of achievement to meet the required standard.
- 4.4 The relevant business area will send a copy of the approved form to the People and Culture Directorate (via [pac@cqu.edu.au](mailto:pac@cqu.edu.au)) to process the appointment.
- 4.5 The Letter of Offer to a person appointed based on professional experience equivalence will include any equivalence requirements and conditions of appointment, such as:
- the appointee's commencement of the relevant higher education AQF level course within six months of appointment and regular demonstrated satisfactory progress towards completing the course to achieve the qualification
  - the appointee's participation in professional development and participation in scholarly activities relevant to the appointee's discipline/field of study as well as maintaining contemporary skills in higher education learning and teaching, and
  - a supervision plan developed in consultation with an appropriately qualified University employee.
- 4.6 The Dean is responsible for ensuring that qualifications, employee supervision plan, and scholarly activity/professional development of employees appointed based on professional experience equivalence are reviewed annually as part of the Performance Enhancement Program. When a continuing employee gains the required AQF qualification level, they will no longer be considered a professional experience equivalence appointment for review purposes.
- 4.7 If a continuing employee has not met the course/qualification requirements within the specified timeframe, or other conditions of employment such as agreed scholarly activity and/or professional development, the employee's status of employment will be reviewed.
- 4.8 The Dean is responsible for ensuring that a register is maintained to manage documentary evidence of how employees' professional experience equivalence (including exceptions) was determined, approved, and reviewed.

## 5 RESPONSIBILITIES

### Compliance, monitoring and review

- 5.1 The Vice-President (Academic) is responsible for implementing, monitoring, reviewing, and ensuring compliance with this policy and procedure.

### Reporting

- 5.2 No additional reporting is required.

### Records management

- 5.3 Employees must manage records in accordance with the [Records Management Policy and Procedure](#). This includes retaining these records in a recognised University recordkeeping information system.
- 5.4 University records must be retained for the minimum periods specified in the relevant [Retention and Disposal Schedule](#). Before disposing of any records, approval must be sought from the Records and Privacy Team (email [records@cqu.edu.au](mailto:records@cqu.edu.au)).

## 6 DEFINITIONS

- 6.1 Terms not defined in this document may be in the University [glossary](#).

## 7 RELATED LEGISLATION AND DOCUMENTS

[Australian Qualifications Framework](#)

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

[Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011](#) (Cwlth)

[TEQSA Guidance Note: Determining Equivalence of Professional Experience and Academic Qualifications](#)

## 8 FEEDBACK

8.1 Feedback about this document can be emailed to [policy@cqu.edu.au](mailto:policy@cqu.edu.au).

## 9 APPROVAL AND REVIEW DETAILS

<b>Approval and Review</b>	<b>Details</b>
Approval Authority	Academic Board
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Notes	This policy and procedure replaced the Professional Experience Equivalence Framework (effective date 29/01/2016).