

Academic Staff Teaching Qualifications and Equivalent Professional Experience Policy

Section 1 - Purpose

(1) This Policy provides guiding principles to ensure that Australian Catholic University academic staff who teach award courses have appropriate qualifications in the relevant discipline and are:

- a. qualified in at least one [Australian Qualifications Framework](#) level higher than the course of study being taught; or
- b. deemed to have obtained “equivalent professional experience” in lieu of formal qualifications as specified in Section 2, clause(8) of this Policy.

(2) The content of this Policy is aligned with the [Higher Education Standards Framework \(Threshold Standards\) 2021](#) Provider Course Accreditation Standards (specifically 3.2).

Section 2 - Policy Statement and Principles

(3) This Policy supports the University’s commitment to provide high quality teaching, mentoring and supervision to all its students by appropriately qualified and experienced staff with:

- a. culturally informed and inclusive teaching practices, particularly in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge and content;
- b. comprehensive and current knowledge of the discipline area and subject material being taught;
- c. a sound understanding of current scholarship and/or professional practice in the discipline areas they teach; and
- d. understandings of pedagogical and adult learning principles relevant to the students being taught.

Guiding Principles Relating to Assessment of Qualifications and Equivalent Experience of Academic Teaching Staff

(4) Academic staff will normally have the required level of formal qualifications specified in this Policy in a discipline relevant to the subject matter that is at least one level higher than the subject being taught.

(5) Where there is an exception to this, for example in emerging areas and in some professional areas, academic staff will need to demonstrate that they have gained a combination of formal qualifications as well as relevant teaching, professional, research and work experiences that meet the requirements of this Policy.

(6) Academic staff who are assessed on a combination of formal qualifications and professional or other experiences must have formal qualifications at minimum that are at the same AQF level as the course being taught in a discipline relevant to the subject matter. Professional and other experiences and skills are used to assess equivalency with the required qualifications for the course.

(7) Teaching, research and professional experience used to assess equivalency must be current and relevant to the subject material being taught and must be supported by appropriate evidence.

(8) The table below outlines the minimum requirements that align with the [Higher Education Standards Framework \(Threshold Standards\) 2021](#). Where Faculties require additional evidence or standards as appropriate for different disciplines or professional areas of study, schedules are to be lodged as per Section 4, clause (17) of the [Academic Staff Teaching Qualifications and Equivalent Professional Experience Procedure](#).

AQF Level of Course	AQF Qualification Requirements	University Guidelines on Equivalence
Level 5: Diplomas (Higher Education)	Level 7: Bachelor Degree	A Bachelor Degree is the minimum qualification to teach University students.
Level 6: Associate Degree, Advanced Diploma	Level 7: Bachelor Degree	A Bachelor Degree is the minimum qualification to teach University students.
Level 7: Bachelor Degree	Level 8: Honours, Graduate Certificates, Graduate Diplomas	Level 7 qualifications (Bachelor degree) and current registration to practice within the relevant profession (if applicable) PLUS: 3 years' relevant teaching, research and/or professional experience in the last five years aligned to the Learning Outcomes of the respective unit
Level 8: Honours, Graduate Certificates, Graduate Diplomas	Level 9: Masters by research or coursework	Level 8 qualifications and current registration to practice within the relevant profession (if applicable) PLUS: • 5 years' relevant teaching, research and/or professional experience in the last 10 years aligned to the Learning Outcomes of the respective unit, OR • Enrolment in a relevant masters or doctoral program course plus relevant professional experience, totalling three years aligned to the Learning Outcomes of the respective unit
Level 9: Master Degree (Coursework) Master Degree (Extended)	Level 10: Doctorate by research or coursework	Level 9 qualifications and current registration to practice within the relevant profession (if applicable) PLUS: • 5 years' relevant teaching, research and/or professional experience in the last 10 years aligned to the Learning Outcomes of the respective unit, OR • Enrolment in a relevant doctoral program plus relevant professional experience, together totalling 5 years aligned to the Learning Outcomes of the respective unit.
Level 9: Master Degree (Research)	Level 10: Doctorate by research or coursework plus meets the current University requirements for accreditation as a Higher Degree Research (HDR) supervisor.	Research supervision is governed by the Higher Degree Research Supervision Policy
Level 10: Professional Doctorate or PhD	PhD or Research Professional Doctorate plus meets the current University requirements for accreditation as a HDR supervisor.	Research supervision is governed by the Higher Degree Research Supervision Policy

Exceptions to This Policy

(9) Occasional guest lecturers or presenters will be exempt from the AQF Qualifications Standards requirement but must be able to bring a level of knowledge and expertise including where relevant in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural knowledge, which adds value to the teaching of their relevant discipline area. Plans for engagement of guest lecturers or presenters must be notified to the National Head of School or equivalent.

(10) Tutors not responsible for unit coordination who work under the guidance of a lecturer in charge and deliver tutorial or workshop classes require qualifications at least at the level of the student, plus suitable support/supervision relevant to professional/industry experience and appropriate teaching methods.

(11) University clinical coordinators, facilitators or clinical teachers and other University work placement coordinators who support student acquisition of workplace skills and experience and may assess those aspects of student learning but are not responsible for unit coordination, require a Bachelor degree in the relevant discipline and three years' relevant teaching, research or professional experience in the last five years.

(12) The University recognises that there may be exceptions not covered by these guidelines. In such cases an academically defensible case detailing the individual's qualifications, skills and level of experience relevant to the discipline must be made for each individual, applying the principles outlined in this Policy and submitted to the Executive Dean for approval, and reported to the University Learning and Teaching Committee annually.

Section 3 - Application of the Policy

(13) This Policy applies to all academic staff teaching and assessing University students enrolled in undergraduate and postgraduate (coursework) award courses and subjects.

Section 4 - Roles and Responsibilities

Chair, Academic Board

(14) The Chair, Academic Board is responsible for:

- a. ensuring that the Policy is reviewed in accordance with the [Policy Development and Review Policy](#); and
- b. monitoring Policy implementation and reporting of outcomes;
- c. externally reference the faculty based discipline specific schedules in line with the Policy review cycle.

University Learning and Teaching Committee

(15) The University Learning and Teaching Committee is responsible for:

- a. receiving and reviewing reports from Faculties under Section 2, clause (12); and
- b. reporting these to Academic Board.

Executive Deans

(16) Executive Deans are responsible for ensuring processes are in place at Faculty level to provide demonstrated evidence that academic teaching staff possess the qualifications or combination of qualifications and equivalence of experience for the relevant AQF level of the course/subject matter. Evidence of qualifications are submitted to People and Capability, on appointment, as part of the employment record per the [Qualifications Verification Policy](#).

(17) Executive Deans maintain a register to provide documentary evidence of how the professional equivalency

requirement was assessed and met for staff who do not meet the [Higher Education Standards Framework \(Threshold Standards\) 2021](#) requirement in relation to qualifications and report this to the University Learning and Teaching Committee annually.

Faculties, Schools, Institutes and Centres

(18) Faculties and their Schools, and Institutes and Centres may develop guidelines consistent with this Policy that provide a discipline specific approach to assessing whether claims of equivalency meet [Higher Education Standards Framework \(Threshold Standards\) 2021](#) standards. These guidelines must be approved by the Faculty Board or relevant standing committee of Faculty Board and reported to the University Learning and Teaching Committee.

(19) Assessment of a staff member's eligibility to teach at any specific AQF Level by the Executive Dean or their nominated delegate (National Heads of School) should assess broader skills and experiences that may include the following:

- a. research and/or creative work;
- b. high quality research publications;
- c. relevant workplace experience;
- d. peer reviews of teaching materials; and
- e. leadership roles in local, state and national advisory bodies and community and professional organisations.

Supervisors of Academic Staff

(20) Supervisors of academic staff will encourage academic staff to complete relevant approved University courses/subjects where there is a need to enhance the knowledge of pedagogical and adult learning principles relevant to the student being taught. This includes completion of the ACU Graduate Certificate in Higher Education or equivalent from another university.

Academic Staff

(21) Academic staff are responsible for ensuring that records regarding their qualifications and experience are kept up to date in line with the [Qualifications Verification Policy](#).

Section 5 - Revisions Made to This Policy

(22) The University may make changes to this Policy from time to time to improve the effectiveness of its operation. In this regard, any staff member who wishes to make any comments about this Policy may forward their suggestions to the Chair of the University Learning and Teaching Committee or the Chair, Academic Board.

(23) Unless otherwise indicated, this Policy will still apply beyond the review date.

Section 6 - Further Assistance

(24) A staff member who requires assistance in understanding this Policy should first consult their nominated supervisor who is responsible for the implementation and operation of these arrangements in their work area. For further queries, please contact the Policy Responsible Officer, Chair, Academic Board.

(25) For related legislation, policies, procedures, guidelines and any supporting resources, please refer to the Associated Information tab.

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	25th September 2025
Review Date	1st November 2026
Approval Authority	Governance Officer
Approval Date	17th September 2025
Expiry Date	Not Applicable
Responsible Executive	Julie Cogin Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)
Responsible Manager	Chris Lonsdale Deputy Provost
Enquiries Contact	Office of the Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)