# Academic Staff Qualifications and Professional Experience Equivalence Policy

# Section 1 - Purpose

(1) The purpose of this Policy is to set out the principles and procedures for Macquarie University academic staff who teach award courses to ensure they have appropriate qualifications in the relevant discipline and are:

a. qualified in at least one Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) 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 clause 8 of this Policy.

(2) This Policy aligns with the requirements of the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 Provider Course Accreditation Standards (specifically 3.2).

(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. comprehensive and current knowledge of the discipline area and subject material being taught;
b. sound understanding of current scholarship and/or professional practice in the discipline areas they teach; and
c. understandings of adult learning principles relevant to the students being taught.

### Scope

(4) This Policy applies to all current and prospective academic staff, whether employed by Macquarie University or any of the University's third-party partners, who teach and assess students enrolled in:

a. Macquarie University undergraduate courses of study (including Diploma and Undergraduate Certificate) and postgraduate courses of study;
b. Standard Foundation, Intensive, and Masters Qualifying programs offered by Macquarie University College; and
c. courses of study offered through a third-party partner (where applicable and in line with the specified terms of agreement).

(5) This Policy does not apply to:

a. occasional and/or guest lecturers;
b. employees of institutions where students are undertaking study on outbound mobility programs or partner supervisors of students undertaking placements, internships or other forms of work-integrated learning;
c. employees involved in supervising candidates enrolled in research higher degrees courses (refer to the Graduate Research Supervision Policy and Graduate Research Supervision Procedure); or
d. employees involved in the delivery of microcredentials and other non-award programs.

# Section 2 - Policy

## Principles

(6) Academic staff will normally have the required level of formal (AQF) qualifications in a discipline relevant to the subject matter that is at least one level higher than the course of study in which the teaching is occurring, as specified in the table in clause 8 of this Policy.

(7) Where academic staff do not have the required level of formal (AQF) qualifications in a discipline relevant to the subject matter, they will need to demonstrate that they have a combination of formal (AQF) qualifications and relevant teaching, professional, research and/or work experiences, as detailed in the table in clause 8 of this Policy.

(8) The following table sets out the required AQF level (in a relevant discipline) or the teaching, research, or professional experience equivalent (in a relevant discipline) for academic staff:

| **Higher education qualification AQF level being taught** | **Minimum AQF level (in a relevant discipline)** | **Teaching, research, or professional experience equivalent (in a relevant discipline)** |
|---|---|---|
| AQF levels 5 and 6<br>(i.e. Diploma, Advanced Diploma, Associate Degree) | AQF level 7<br>(i.e. Bachelor Degree) | AQF level 6 qualification<br>current membership/registration (or equivalent) to practice within a relevant profession<br>PLUS, EITHER<br>three years relevant teaching, research and/or professional experience within the last five years<br>OR<br>enrolment and demonstrated satisfactory progress in a relevant AQF level 7 course |
| AQF level 7<br>(i.e. Bachelor Degree) | AQF level 8<br>(i.e. Bachelor Honours Degree, Graduate Certificate, Graduate Diploma) | AQF level 7 qualification<br>current membership/registration (or equivalent) to practice within a relevant profession<br>PLUS, EITHER<br>two years relevant teaching, research and/or professional experience within the last five years<br>OR<br>enrolment and demonstrated satisfactory progress in a relevant AQF level 8 course and relevant professional experience, together totalling three years. |
| AQF level 8<br>(i.e. Bachelor Honours Degree, Graduate Certificate, Graduate Diploma) | AQF level 9<br>(i.e. Masters Degree by research or coursework) | AQF level 8 qualification<br>current membership/registration to practice within a relevant profession<br>PLUS, EITHER<br>three years relevant teaching, research and/or professional experience within the last 10 years<br>OR<br>enrolment and demonstrated satisfactory progress in a relevant AQF level 9 course plus relevant professional experience, together totalling three years |
| AQF level 9<br>(i.e. Masters Degree by research or coursework) | AQF level 10<br>(i.e. Doctorate by research or coursework) | AQF level 9 qualification and current registration to practice within the relevant profession (if applicable)<br>PLUS<br>three years' relevant teaching, research and/or professional experience in the last 10 years<br>OR<br>Enrolment in a relevant doctoral program plus relevant professional experience, together totalling three years |

(9) 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.

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(10) University staff who are not unit convenors, but who provide workplace education for students on work/industry placements and/or who assess skills and/or experiences obtained on these placements, require a Bachelor degree in a relevant discipline and at least two years' relevant teaching, research, or professional experience within the last five years.

### Exceptions

(11) An exception to the requirements specified in this Policy is when the University employs specialists to teach 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 formal (AQF) level qualifications.

(12) The University recognises that there may be occasions when exceptions are not covered by this Policy. In such cases an academically defensible case detailing the individual's qualifications, skills, and level of experience relevant to the discipline must be made, applying the principles outlined in this Policy and submitted to the Executive Dean and/or the Director, Macquarie University College (as relevant) for approval.

### Considerations

(13) When deciding how an employee's equivalent professional experience may be demonstrated, one or more of the following must apply:

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 or engagement as a consultant;
e. 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;
f. 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;
g. 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
h. letters of support from recognised peers, testimonials, awards, or other recognition that acknowledges leadership or expertise in the relevant discipline/field of study.

# Section 3 - Procedures

(14) The Executive Dean and/or the Director, Macquarie University College(as relevant) is responsible for employing appropriately qualified employees and must be satisfied that their professional experience meets the principles and requirements stated in Section 2 of this Policy.

(15) Where applicable, the relevant business area will submit a completed Professional Experience Equivalence Form to the Executive Dean and/or the Director, Macquarie University College (as relevant) 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.

(16) The Letter of Offer to a potential employee who has been appointed based on professional experience equivalence will include any equivalence requirements and conditions of appointment, such as:

a. the appointee's commencement of the relevant higher education AQF level course within a specified time frame and regular demonstrated satisfactory progress towards completing the course to achieve the qualification;
b. 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
c. a supervision plan developed in consultation with an appropriately qualified University employee.

(17) The Head of Department/School or Director of the College 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 Development Performance Review. When a continuing employee gains the required AQF qualification level, they will no longer be considered a professional experience equivalence appointment for review purposes.

(18) 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.

(19) Monitoring of staff qualifications and professional experience is undertaken during the accreditation and reaccreditation of courses of study in line with the Course of Study Accreditation Policy and the Course of Study Reaccreditation Policy.

# Section 4 - Guidelines

(20) Nil.

# Section 5 - Definitions

(21) Nil.

## Status and Details

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