

Academic Staff Qualifications and Equivalence Policy

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1. Purpose

This policy outlines guiding principles and procedures to ensure that academic staff who teach award courses at ECA College of Health Sciences (CHS):

- Hold a qualification in a relevant discipline at least one [Australian Qualifications Framework \(AQF\)](#) level higher than the course of study being taught; or
- Demonstrate equivalent professional experience in lieu of formal qualifications, as specified in Table 1 of this policy.

This policy ensures compliance with the [Higher Education Standards Framework \(Threshold Standards\) 2021](#), specifically *Standard 3.2 (Staffing)*.

This policy supports the College's commitment to deliver high quality teaching to all its students through appropriately qualified and experienced staff with:

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

2. Scope

This policy applies to all academic staff engaged in teaching, supervision, or academic oversight in award courses delivered by the College.

This policy does not apply to occasional guest lecturers or presenters. Guest lecturers must provide expertise that enhances the learning experience and must be approved by the Deputy Dean (Programs).

3. Definitions

Item	Definition
<i>Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)</i>	Framework which describes the minimum standards and levels of Australian qualifications and award courses.
<i>Managerial work experience</i>	Work experience where the person has responsibility for planning and organising processes and resources including human resources and making strategic and operational decisions.
<i>Professional work experience</i>	Work experience involving independent decision-making, accountability for outcomes, and specialised expertise requiring professional judgment
<i>Relevant discipline</i>	A discipline or area of study directly aligned, or closely allied, to the subject matter being taught. Typically this will fall within the same broad Field of Education as classified in the Australian Standard Classification of Education (ASCED), 2001 .

Item	Definition
<i>Related field</i>	A field of professional practice or work that is strongly connected to the subject matter being taught, even if it sits outside the immediate discipline classification. This may be evidenced through industry standards, occupational classifications, or recognised professional pathways.
<i>Qualification</i>	The broad discipline-free nomenclature used in the AQF to describe each category of AQF qualification.

4. Qualification Requirements and Equivalence Framework

- Academic staff will normally have the required level of formal (AQF) qualifications in a relevant discipline that is at least one level higher than the program in which the teaching is occurring, as specified in Table 1.
- Academic staff who do not have the required level of formal (AQF) qualifications will need to demonstrate that they have a combination of formal qualifications and relevant teaching, professional, research and/or work experiences as detailed in Table 1.
- Table 1 sets out the required AQF level (in a relevant discipline) or the teaching, research, or professional experience equivalent (in a relevant discipline or related field) for academic staff.

Table 1: Minimum qualification requirements for academic staff

Course Level Being Taught	Minimum AQF Level	Guidelines on Equivalence
AQF 5: Diploma	Bachelor's degree (AQF 7) in a relevant discipline	At least five years of full-time current teaching experience at AQF 5 with demonstrated success and evidence of scholarship in the field.
AQF 7: Bachelor's Degree	Bachelor Honours degree, Graduate Certificate or Graduate Diploma (AQF 8) in a relevant discipline	- Bachelor's degree (AQF 7) in a relevant discipline <u>and</u> at least five years of full-time managerial and/or professional work experience in a related field; and/or - Bachelor's degree (AQF 7) in a relevant discipline <u>and</u> at least five years of full-time current teaching experience at AQF 7 with demonstrated success and evidence of scholarship in the field.
AQF 8: Bachelor Honours; Graduate Certificate; Graduate Diploma	Master's degree (AQF 9) in a relevant discipline	- Bachelor Honours degree, Graduate Certificate or Graduate Diploma (AQF 8) in a relevant discipline <u>and</u> at least five years of full-time managerial and/or professional work experience in a related field; and/or - Bachelor Honours degree, Graduate Certificate or Graduate Diploma (AQF 8) in a relevant discipline <u>and</u> at least five years of full-time current teaching experience at

		AQF 8 with demonstrated success and evidence of scholarship in the field.
AQF 9: Master's Degree (Coursework)	PhD (AQF 10) in a relevant discipline	• Master's degree (AQF 9) in a relevant discipline <u>and</u> at least five years of full-time managerial and/or professional work experience in a role requiring specialised knowledge, expertise, and independent high-level planning and management of people and/or complex processes/projects; and/or • Master's degree (AQF 9) in a relevant discipline <u>and</u> at least five years of full-time current teaching experience at AQF 9 with demonstrated success and evidence of scholarship in the field.
AQF 9: Master's Degree (Research)	PhD (AQF 10) in a relevant discipline	• Master's degree (research) (AQF 9) in a relevant discipline <u>and</u> at least five-years full-time managerial and/or professional work experience in a role requiring specialised knowledge, expertise, and independent high-level planning and management of people and/or complex processes/projects; and/or • Master's degree (research) (AQF 9) in a relevant discipline <u>and</u> at least five years of full-time current teaching experience at AQF 9 in programs with a significant research component, with demonstrated success and evidence of scholarship in the field; and/or • At least 10 years of current research experience in a related field equivalent to a Doctoral degree, to be determined through evidence which might include peer-reviewed publications, research-related awards or prizes, professional reports, a body of creative work, and/or expert commentary.

- d. Teaching, research, and professional experience used to assess equivalency must be relevant to the subject material being taught and must be supported by appropriate evidence.
- e. Evidence to support equivalence of experience may include, but is not limited to:
- experience in professional, business, creative, or other practice-based roles requiring high order judgement and the provision of expert advice;
 - senior managerial experience in a related field;
 - leadership roles in professional organisations, advisory boards, or industry networks

- testimonials, awards, or other recognition that acknowledges leadership or expertise in the field;
- professional qualifications, certifications, and demonstrated professional standing;
- contribution to the development of professional standards, codes, guidelines, policy, or reports;
- contribution to research projects, peer-reviewed publications, or scholarly works in a related field;
- current teaching experience in a related field with documented evidence of success
- participation in professional development relevant to the discipline and/or higher education learning and teaching.

5. Recruitment and Selection

The Dean (Academic), Dean (Research and Scholarship), and Deputy Dean (Programs) are responsible for employing appropriately qualified academic staff and must be satisfied that their professional experience meets the principles and requirements stated in this Policy.

An academic who is offered employment based on professional experience equivalence may have conditions of appointment, such as:

- a. commencement of (or completion of an already commenced) relevant higher education AQF qualification within a specified timeframe; and/or
- b. participation in ongoing professional development and/or scholarly activities relevant to their discipline and/or in higher education learning and teaching; and/or
- c. supervision by appropriately qualified academic staff.

Further details about the procedures for recruitment at CHS are outlined in *Education Centre of Australia's (ECA)¹ Recruitment and Selection Policy*.

6. Recording of Qualifications and Equivalence

The qualifications and or equivalence of academic staff will be recorded as part of their staff record, as will the approved level of teaching in which they may be engaged.

7. Related Documents

- Staff Induction Policy
- Academic Integrity Policy
- Academic Staff Professional Development Policy
- Academic Promotion Policy and Procedure for Higher Education
- Workforce Plan
- Strategic Plan
- ECA Recruitment and Selection Policy
- ECA Staff Development Policy
- Equity and Diversity Policy

¹ Education Centre of Australia (ECA) is CHS's parent organisation.

8. Related Legislation

- Tertiary Education Quality and Standards (TEQSA) Act 2011 (Cth)
- Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021
- Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)
- Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000
- The National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 (The National Code)
- Higher Education Support Act 2003 (Cth)
- Fair Work Act 2009
- Workplace Health and Safety Act 2011
- Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)

9. Version Control

Document ID	Academic Staff Qualifications and Equivalence Policy
Category	Academic
Document Owner	Dean (Academic)
Approved by	Academic Board

Version	Summary of changes	Approval date	Next review date
1.0	Document Established	Academic Board: 11 September 2018 Board of Directors: 18 September 2018	30 September 2020
1.1	Minor changes to job titles and extension of review date	CEO 12 October 2023	12 October 2024
1.2	Minor changes to job titles and extension of review date	CEO 30 January 2025	12 October 2025
2.0	Harmonised policy across ECA Higher Education. Key changes include: • Updated references and role titles • Added a new section on recruitment and selection • Integrated the Minimum Qualification Requirements for Academic Staff table into the main policy	Academic Board 03 October 2025	03 October 2027

	body (previously in appendix)		
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