

# **Academic Qualifications and Equivalent Professional Experience Policy and Procedures**

## **Purpose**

This Policy outlines the approach to Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) equivalence mapping for academic staff who do not meet the AQF+1 requirement for teaching. Its purpose is to ensure that all academic staff at the Central Institute of Technology and Innovation (the Institute) possess the qualifications, professional experience, and disciplinary expertise necessary to deliver courses at the appropriate level, in accordance with the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021.

## **Scope**

The Policy applies to all current and potential academic staff at the Institute.

## **Related Documents**

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following Institute documents:

- Staff Code of Conduct Policy and Procedures
- Staff Recruitment Policy and Procedures
- Staff Grievances, Complaints, and Appeals Policy and Procedures
- Anti-discrimination Policy and Procedures
- Risk Management Policy and Procedures

All documents referenced in this policy can be accessed via the CITI website.

## Definition of Key Terms

For the purpose of this Policy, the following definitions apply:

Term	Definition
Academic Leadership Team	The Academic Leadership Team comprises the Dean and other senior academic leaders.
Academic Board (AB)	The Academic Board is the principal academic body of the Central Institute of Technology and Innovation that is responsible for approving academic proposals and for providing advice on academic policy, academic strategy and academic standards.
Learning and Teaching Committee (LTC)	Learning and Teaching Committee (LTC) is the committee that monitors and reports on quality assurance processes for teaching and learning to ensure daily academic operations meet quality educational standards.
Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)	The Australian Qualifications Framework is the national policy for regulated educational qualifications in Australia.
Award	An award means the degree certification or diploma issued by the Institute indicating that the student has successfully completed a course of study.
Board of Directors (Board)	Board of Directors means the Board of Directors of the Central Institute of Technology and Innovation responsible for the overall governance, management and strategic direction of the Institute and for delivering accountable corporate performance in accordance with the organisation's goals and objectives and

Term	Definition
	with all relevant Australian legislation and regulations.
Course of Study	Course of study is a structured series of academic units culminating in a higher education award.
The Institute	The Central Institute of Technology and Innovation including staff, students, affiliates, and contractors.
Tertiary Education and Quality Standards Authority (TEQSA)	TEQSA is Australia's independent national quality assurance and regulatory agency for higher education.
Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 (HES Framework)	The Higher Education Standards Framework Threshold Standards sets the standards that a provider must meet and continue to meet to be registered to operate as a higher education provider in Australia. The Threshold Standards underpin and provide assurance of quality and integrity in the delivery of Australian higher education.
Academic staff member	Academic staff means any person holding a contract of employment with the Institute that is engaged in teaching, the provision of learning or scholarship.

## Policy Principles

The Institute is committed to ensuring that all academic staff meet the standards required under the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021, maintaining high-quality teaching and learning outcomes. The following principles guide the appointment, assessment, and recognition of academic staff qualifications and experience:

1. **Academic Qualification and Expertise:** All academic staff must hold a minimum qualification equivalent to the AQF level of the course they teach, ensuring that staff possess a strong disciplinary foundation. Where applicable,



staff may demonstrate equivalence through a combination of academic qualifications and relevant professional or practice-based experience.

2. **Recognition of Professional Experience:** Professional experience is considered in its broadest sense, including prior teaching experience, professional practice, scholarship, and contributions to the advancement of the discipline. Equivalence assessments take into account experience that demonstrates the capacity to teach at the required AQF level effectively and with academic rigour.
3. **Evidence-Based Assessment:** Assessments of equivalence and suitability are informed by verifiable evidence of professional practice, leadership, and contributions to the field of education, which may include:
  - Relevant professional qualifications and continuing professional development.
  - Leadership roles in the development of professional standards and practices.
  - Senior-level responsibilities requiring expert judgement and decision-making.
  - Management of significant projects within the discipline.
  - Recognition through awards, testimonials, or other formal acknowledgements of expertise.
  - Contributions to professional networks, advisory boards, and community engagement in education.
  - Ongoing scholarship, including participation in learning and teaching initiatives.
  - Peer-reviewed publications and other scholarly outputs, including books, reports, and research contributions.
4. **Upholding Academic Standards:** The Institute ensures that all appointments, promotions, and teaching assignments align with the AQF+1 requirement or



equivalent, safeguarding the quality and integrity of its academic offerings. All processes for assessing staff qualifications and experience are transparent, consistent, and accountable, reflecting the Institute's commitment to maintaining high standards in accordance with the Threshold Standards.

5. **Continuous Improvement:** The Institute encourages ongoing professional development, scholarship, and engagement in the field to ensure that academic staff remain current in their discipline and teaching practices. Evidence of continued learning, research, and leadership strengthens the Institute's capacity to maintain exemplary teaching standards and meet regulatory requirements.

## Policy Statement

### 1. Higher Education Standards Framework

- 1.1 The Standards in the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 (HES Framework) concerned with staffing require registered higher education providers to ensure that academic staff appointed to teach students are appropriately qualified in the relevant discipline for their level of teaching.
- 1.2 The Standards specify that academic teaching staff must be qualified to at least one level of qualification higher than the course of study being taught (AQF+1), or have equivalent relevant academic, professional, or practice-based experience and expertise.
- 1.3 Any process that centres on the mapping of equivalence should be informed by:
  - 1.3.1 **The full range of professional experience:** This includes teaching experience (i.e., teaching at lower AQF levels, conducting professional

development seminars, giving public lectures), scholarship, and professional practice

- 1.3.2 **A minimum requirement for academic qualification(s):** staff are required to hold a qualification equivalent to the AQF level of the course of study. That is, all Institute academic staff must hold a minimum of a bachelor's degree (AQF Level 7).

## 2. Evidence Requirements

When assessing the professional experience and suitability of an individual for an academic teaching role, the Institute may consider a range of evidence, including but not limited to:

- 2.1 **Professional Qualifications and Development:** Relevant academic and professional qualifications, together with evidence of ongoing professional development that supports current knowledge and practice in the field.
- 2.2 **Leadership in Professional Standards:** Demonstrated leadership in the development, implementation, or promotion of professional standards within the discipline.
- 2.3 **Senior-Level Roles:** Experience in roles of significant responsibility, including positions requiring strategic decision-making and management of teams or programs.
- 2.4 **Expert Judgement and Advisory Roles:** Performance in roles that require a high level of professional judgement and the provision of expert advice.
- 2.5 **Project Management:** Management of substantial projects or initiatives within the field, demonstrating planning, execution, and outcomes aligned with organisational or professional objectives.
- 2.6 **Recognition and Awards:** Testimonials, awards, or other formal recognition that attest to leadership, expertise, or outstanding contribution to the field of education.

- 2.7 **Professional Engagement:** Active participation in advisory boards, professional networks, or other collaborative initiatives that contribute to the advancement of the discipline.
- 2.8 **Scholarship and Learning Contributions:** Evidence of ongoing scholarship, innovation, and contributions to teaching and learning within an academic or professional context.
- 2.9 **Peer-Reviewed Publications:** Authorship or co-authorship of peer-reviewed publications in relevant academic or professional fields.
- 2.10 **Other Scholarly Outputs:** Additional publications, such as books, reports, or professional guides, that demonstrate expertise and influence in the field.

### 3. AQF Equivalence Mapping for Teaching

- 3.1 The Institute will assess, on a case-by-case basis, the qualifications and professional experience of academic staff who do not meet the AQF+1 requirement.
- 3.2 In all cases, however, ongoing and sessional academic staff are required to hold a minimum of a bachelor's degree (AQF Level 7).
- 3.3 Table 1 sets out the equivalence mapping to guide the evaluation of qualifications and professional experience in accordance with Institute standards.

**Table 1. AQF Equivalence Mapping**

AQF Level (of program(s) in which the course(s) are being taught)	AQF Level of teaching staff	Demonstration of a sufficient combination of the following equivalence factors to meet the learning outcomes of the AQF*
Level 7 – Bachelor (Pass)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Level 8: Bachelor Honours Degree,</li> </ul>	A sufficient combination of the following to demonstrate AQF level 8 learning outcomes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AQF Level 7</li> </ul>

AQF Level (of program(s) in which the course(s) are being taught)	AQF Level of teaching staff	Demonstration of a sufficient combination of the following equivalence factors to meet the learning outcomes of the AQF*
	<p>Graduate Certificate, Graduate Diploma</p> <p>Or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Level 7: Bachelor (Pass) plus a sufficient combination of criteria outlined in column 3</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enrolled in honours or a higher degree AQF level 8 and above</li> <li>Strong academic record in a relevant discipline area (e.g., Distinction average)</li> <li>Relevant professional experience</li> <li>Relevant industry training or non-formal course(s)</li> <li>Teaching, mentoring experience (e.g., PASS leader)</li> <li>Leadership experience</li> <li>Performing in a role that requires high order judgement/provision of expert advice</li> <li>Professional registration and participation in professional networks</li> <li>Participation on advisory boards</li> <li>Peer reviewed publications in the field of study</li> <li>Other publications (e.g., books, reports, presentations)</li> <li>Undertaking a professional development program in university teaching</li> </ul>
Level 8 – Bachelor (Honours), Graduate Certificate, Graduate Diploma	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Level 9: Masters</li> </ul> <p>Or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Level 8: Bachelor (Honours), Graduate Certificate, Graduate Diploma plus a sufficient combination</li> </ul>	<p>A sufficient combination of the following to demonstrate AQF level 9 learning outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AQF Level 8</li> <li>Enrolled in Master's or higher degree (AQF level 9 and above)</li> <li>Strong academic record in a relevant discipline area (e.g., Honours 1st Class or 2(1))</li> <li>Relevant professional experience</li> <li>Teaching, mentoring experience</li> <li>Performing in a role that requires high order judgement/provision of expert advice</li> </ul>



AQF Level (of program(s) in which the course(s) are being taught)	AQF Level of teaching staff	Demonstration of a sufficient combination of the following equivalence factors to meet the learning outcomes of the AQF*
	of the criteria in column 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leadership in the development of professional standards</li> <li>Professional registration and participation in professional networks</li> <li>Participation on advisory boards</li> <li>Peer reviewed publications in the field of study</li> <li>Other publications (e.g., books, reports, presentations)</li> </ul>
Level 9 – Masters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Level 10: Doctoral</li> </ul> <p>Or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Level 9: Masters plus a sufficient combination of the criteria in column 3</li> </ul>	<p>A sufficient combination of the following to demonstrate AQF level 10 learning outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AQF Level 9</li> <li>Enrolled in Masters, PhD, or Doctorate</li> <li>Strong academic record in a relevant discipline area</li> <li>Relevant professional or research experience</li> <li>Teaching, mentoring experience</li> <li>Performing in a role that requires high order judgement/provision of expert advice</li> <li>Leadership in the development of professional standards</li> <li>Participation in advisory boards and professional networks</li> <li>Peer reviewed publications in the field of study</li> <li>Other publications (e.g. books, reports, presentations)</li> </ul>
Level 10 – Doctoral	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Level 10: PhD or Professional Doctorate</li> </ul> <p>Or</p>	<p>Relevant professional experience (10+ years) and a sufficient combination of the following to demonstrate AQF level 10 learning outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AQF Level 9 qualification</li> </ul>

AQF Level (of program(s) in which the course(s) are being taught)	AQF Level of teaching staff	Demonstration of a sufficient combination of the following equivalence factors to meet the learning outcomes of the AQF*
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Level 9: Masters plus a sufficient combination of the criteria in column 3</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enrolled in a PhD or Professional Doctorate</li> <li>Teaching, mentoring experience</li> <li>Performing in a role that requires high order judgement/provision of expert advice</li> <li>Leadership in the development of professional standards</li> <li>Participation in advisory boards and professional networks</li> <li>Peer reviewed publications in the field of study</li> <li>Independent research carried out</li> <li>Other publications (e.g., books, reports, presentations)</li> </ul>

## Procedures

The following procedures apply to this Policy:

### 1. Recruitment and Appointment

- 3.4 Selection criteria for all academic positions, whether ongoing or sessional, must explicitly specify the AQF+1 qualification as the minimum standard for appointments. Failure to meet this minimum qualification constitutes a legitimate and substantive reason to exclude a candidate from progressing to interview.
- 3.5 Where an applicant does not meet the AQF+1 requirement but demonstrates professional experience deemed relevant and sufficient for the role, the Dean in consultation with the Academic Leadership Team may recommend that the candidate proceed to interview. In such cases,

teaching equivalence must be clearly documented, demonstrating that the candidate possesses the professional and academic expertise necessary to satisfy the standards outlined in Table 1.

- 3.6 Prior to extending an offer of employment, approval must be obtained from the Learning and Teaching Committee and the Academic Board. This approval must be accompanied by a detailed justification for the appointment, ensuring transparency and alignment with Institute standards and regulatory requirements.

## **2. Ongoing Professional Development**

- 3.7 The Institute is committed to supporting the continuous professional growth of its academic staff to ensure the maintenance of high-quality teaching and compliance with the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021. As part of a negotiated professional development or related scholarship plan, the Institute may provide support for academic staff to undertake further study, professional development activities, or research initiatives aimed at attaining an AQF+1 qualification.
- 3.8 Such support will be considered on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the strategic priorities of the Institute, the individual staff member's current qualifications and professional experience, and the potential impact on teaching quality and student outcomes.
- 3.9 Engagement in these activities is intended to strengthen staff disciplinary expertise, enhance teaching capability, and ensure that all academic staff meet or exceed the standards required for teaching at the relevant AQF level.
- 3.10 The Institute will monitor and review the outcomes of supported professional development to ensure that it contributes effectively to staff capacity building, compliance with regulatory requirements, and the Institute's broader educational objectives.

## 4. Reporting to TEQSA

- 4.1 As part of the Institute's obligations for course accreditation, reaccreditation, and re-registration, the equivalence mapping of staff qualifications relative to the AQF+1 requirement must be accurately documented and reported to TEQSA and other relevant regulatory bodies.
- 4.2 Such reporting ensures transparency, compliance with the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021, and demonstrates that all academic staff meet the qualifications and experience requirements necessary to deliver the Institute's courses.
- 4.3 Human Resources is responsible for verifying the accuracy of equivalence mapping prior to submission and for maintaining appropriate records to support TEQSA reporting and any future audits or reviews.

## Related Legislation

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following related documents:

- [Australian Qualifications Framework](#)
- [Higher Education Standards Framework \(Threshold Standards\) 2021](#)
- [Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency \(teqsa.gov.au\)](https://teqsa.gov.au)

## Change and Version Control

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## Policy Information

<b>Author</b>	Chief Executive Officer
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