

Academic Equivalence Policy and Procedure

Supporting plans, policies and procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workforce Plan • Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedure • Learning and Teaching Policy • Staff Professional Development and Scholarly Activity Policy and Procedure • Governance and Delegations Framework and Policy
Related Legislation and Documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 • Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) Act 2011 • TEQSA Guidance Note: Determining Equivalence of Professional Experience and Academic Qualifications, Version 2.2, 11 October 2017 • Academic Equivalence Form • Academic Equivalence Register
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Document review	This document is to be reviewed every two-years at a minimum from the date of final approval

Version	Review Date and Person/Body	Notes
0.1	Developed and reviewed by Learning and Teaching Committee in May and June 2020	
1.0	Reviewed by Academic Board (AB) on 2 July 2020	
1.1	Reviewed and approved by Academic Board on 21 July 2020 subject to the AB's feedback being incorporated	
2.0	Approved by Academic Board on 21 July 2020	Feedback from AB meeting incorporated
2.1	Approved by Academic Board on 15 September 2020	Minor updates included after internal and external independent review
3.0	Reviewed and approved by the Academic Board via email circulation on 23 July 2021	Updates made following the response to the TEQSA Request for Information 23 July 2021

Background and Scope

This policy and procedure assists MIHE to fulfil its obligation to ensure that the extent of academic oversight and teaching capacity needed to effectively lead students in intellectual inquiry occurs for each course of study and is suited to the nature and level of expected learning outcomes

The purpose of this policy and procedure is to ensure that teaching staff are suitably qualified to effectively carry out their duties. This document provides guidelines for the assessment of the equivalence of professional experience for determining that academic teaching staff are qualified to at least one Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) qualification higher than the course of study being taught or have equivalent professional experience.

This policy and procedure aims to ensure that appointment processes of teaching staff at MIHE are compliant with the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 and enables students to attain the relevant Graduate Attributes. The policy and procedure applies to all existing and prospective MIHE employed academic staff engaged in teaching and assessing students enrolled in MIHE courses and units. It 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.

Definitions

See Glossary of Terms.

Academic Equivalence Policy

MIHE is committed to ensure that all teaching staff are suitably qualified. This suitability must be based on the appointment of academic staff who are qualified in the particular field of study at least one level more advanced than the level of the course being taught. Where a unit has a research component, the academic staff teaching the research component will be required to demonstrate relevant research skills and experience.

Where a teaching 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 in the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 are met. In such cases, an employee's professional experience must be current and relevant to the discipline or field of study that is to be taught and must be demonstrated by meeting the criteria outlined in this policy and procedure.

In the event that an employee is appointed based on a determination of professional experience equivalence, they must be supervised by an employee who meets the AQF requirement of holding one AQF level qualification higher than the level being taught.

However, if an ongoing employee is appointed based on a determination of professional experience equivalence, they are required to commence study in a relevant higher level AQF qualification within six months of their appointment. The person must demonstrate satisfactory progress towards completing the qualification within a specified timeframe when their appointment is reviewed. If a person is appointed based on a determination of professional experience equivalence, they must be supervised by an employee who meets the AQF requirement of holding one AQF level qualification higher than the level being taught.

Criteria

The minimum requirements for equivalence are specified in Table 1. In the event that there are any changes in the AQF standards or the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 this table will be updated.

Table 1

AQF Level Being Taught	AQF Qualifications Of Teaching Staff	Guidelines on Equivalence of Professional Experience
Level 7 - Bachelor Degree	Level 8 - Bachelor Honours Degree, Graduate Certificate, Graduate Diploma	AQF level 7 qualification and equivalent professional qualification and current membership or registration to practice within a relevant area plus either of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 years relevant teaching, research and/or professional experience within the last 5 years OR <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enrolment and demonstrated satisfactory progress in a relevant AQF level 8 course and relevant professional experience, together totalling 3 years.
Level 8 -Bachelor Honours Degree, Graduate Certificate, Graduate Diploma	Level 9 – Masters by Research or Coursework	AQF Level 9 professional qualification, OR AQF Level 8 or equivalent professional qualification and current professional membership or registration to practice within the relevant area plus either of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 years relevant teaching, research and/or professional experience in the last 10 years.

		<p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enrolment and demonstrated satisfactory completion of at least two-thirds of a relevant AQF level 9 (Master's) course PLUS some relevant teaching, research and/or professional experience, together totalling 5 years.
Level 9 - Masters Degree (Coursework)	Level 10 – Doctoral degree by Research or Coursework	<p>AQF Level 10 equivalent professional qualification OR AQF Level 9 or equivalent professional qualification and current professional membership or registration to practice within the relevant area plus one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5 years relevant teaching, research and/or professional experience in the last 10 years. <p>Or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enrolment and demonstrated satisfactory completion of at least two-thirds of a relevant AQF level 10 (Doctoral) course plus some relevant teaching and/or professional experience, together totalling 5 years

Source: Adapted from Charles Sturt University Academic Equivalence Policy.

For the purpose of evaluating the equivalence of professional experience, the individual must have the following:

- Evidence supporting the teaching capabilities of the individual at a given level and
- Evidence of expertise in practice application applicable to the MIHE Graduate Attributes and learning outcomes of the course being taught.

The evidence specified in the table below should be acknowledged for evaluating the professional experience of an individual:

Table 2

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> regular and recent contributions to the discipline/field of study via quality publications, reports and/or presentations sustained and significant contributions to the discipline/field of study, e.g. one peer-reviewed journal article per year in the preceding five years leadership or management of research acknowledged by peers 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 letters of support from recognised peers in the relevant discipline/field of study. working to effect a demonstrable change in creating new practice in the discipline/field of study

- leadership in advisory bodies and/or community organisations, peak discipline or industry bodies relevant to the teaching discipline/field of study
- performing in roles at a senior level (other than determined as an equivalent professional qualification)
- performing in a role (other than determined as an equivalent professional qualification) that requires high order judgement and the provision of expert advice
- managing significant projects in the field of study
- testimonials, awards or other recognition that acknowledges leadership or expertise in the field of study
- contributions in the field of study through participation in advisory boards and professional networks

Adapted from the TEQSA Guidance Note: Determining Equivalence of Professional Experience and Academic Qualifications, Version 2.2, 11 October 2017 (<https://www.teqsa.gov.au/latest-news/publications/guidance-note-determining-equivalence-professional-experience-and-academic>)

Exceptions

The only exceptions to these criteria are when employing expert practitioners who will teach under the supervision of an MIHE employee with the required AQF level qualifications or teachers provided by partner organisations under partnership agreements to deliver MIHE courses and units if:

- (i) the Dean is satisfied that such an exemption would not jeopardise the academic quality or standards of MIHE; and
- (ii) the exemption would not be detrimental to the learning experience for enrolled students than if they were being taught by MIHE staff.

When deciding whether to apply the above criteria in circumstances not covered by this policy and procedure, the Dean or other relevant senior manager will recommend a course of action, on a case by case basis to the Chief Executive Officer or their delegate for a decision.

Academic Equivalence Procedure

- I. The Dean is responsible for employing appropriately qualified employees and must be satisfied that their professional experience meets the criteria stated above.
- II. The relevant work area must submit a completed Professional Experience Equivalence Form to the Dean for recommendation to the Chief Executive Officer for approval. The form must

include an appropriate supervision plan and evidence of scholarship in their discipline **and** in learning and teaching.

- III. 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 responsible for implementing the plan;
- IV. The review of appropriateness of qualifications will include consideration of the following:
 - Skills, knowledge and application of knowledge and skills to the relevant AQF level; and
 - Significance in supporting students in attaining Graduate Attributes, TEQSA and AQF specifications for a Graduate Certificate, Graduate Diploma or Masters award.
 - Evidence of the staff qualifications, and/or equivalence of professional experience to AQF Levels will be maintained through a Record of Academic Staff which will be reviewed annually by the Academic Board.

The Letter of Offer to a person appointed based on professional experience equivalence must include any equivalence requirements and conditions of appointment, including:

- (i) commencement of the relevant higher education AQF level course within six months of commencing employment with MIHE and regular demonstrated satisfactory progress towards completion of the course leading to the qualification;
 - (ii) 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 teaching and learning; and
 - (iii) a supervision plan developed by an appropriately qualified MIHE employee.
- f) The Dean must review the qualifications, employee supervision plan and scholarly activity/professional development of employees appointed based on professional experience equivalence annually as part of the professional development process. If these conditions have not been met, the employee's employment status will be reviewed.
- g) The Dean must maintain a register to manage documentary evidence of how employees' professional experience equivalence was determined, approved and reviewed.

Attachment 1 – Academic Equivalence Form

MIHE Application for Academic Equivalence by Academic Staff

Section 1

Name:

Staff number:

Current Appointment level (e.g. Lecturer, Senior Lecturer):

Current Highest AQF Qualification level held: (e.g. Bachelor degree) Level of AQF Equivalence sought (e.g. AQF Level 8):

Section 2

Please provide a summary of approximately two pages demonstrating equivalent professional experience addressing the relevant criteria of the AQF level for which equivalence is sought:

Section 3: Course Director/Dean/Head of School Recommendation:

Equivalence to AQF level: . . . (Insert level) Recommended / Not Recommended

Reason for decision:

Name:

Signed:

Date: 00/00/00

Section 4 Decision of the Staff Qualification Equivalence Committee

Reason for decision:

Approved to AQF Level /Not Approved

Date:00/00/00

Chair of Learning and Teaching Committee

Attachment 2 – Academic Equivalence Register

Name of staff member & Level of appointment	Date Commenced	Name of supervisor	Summary of equivalent professional experience & AQF Level of experience recognised	Plan of action	End date for completion	Review of employee supervision plan and scholarly activity/professional development