3.2.1 Higher Education Professional Equivalence Policy

1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines and criteria for determining professional experience equivalence to the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) standard for academic staff at Acknowledge Education (AE). It ensures that academic staff possess the necessary qualifications or equivalent experience to meet the quality standards required by the program and aligns with the Higher Education Standards Framework while providing flexibility for exceptional cases and maintaining appropriate records in order to meet reporting responsibilities.

2.0 Scope

The Higher Education Professional Equivalence policy outlines the criteria and procedures for determining the qualifications and experience required for academic staff positions within a higher education institution. It provides guidance to academic staff, human resources staff, and teaching staff on how to assess the equivalency of qualifications and professional experience when hiring or evaluating academic personnel. This policy helps ensure that individuals with diverse educational and professional backgrounds receive fair consideration for academic roles, promoting inclusivity and diversity within the institution.

3.0 Regulatory Context

This policy aligns with the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021, Section 3.2.3.c and 3.2.4. The HESF specifies that academic teaching staff must be qualified to at least one level of qualification (AQF level or equivalent) higher than the course of study being taught or have equivalent relevant academic or professional, or practice-based experience and expertise.

4.0 Policy

Acknowledge Education teaching will be delivered by staff capable of meeting the quality and standards required by the program. Acknowledge Education ensures that all higher education teaching staff are qualified at one level above what they are teaching (i.e., ‘AQF+1') or that they have equivalent experience.

4.1 Guidelines and Criteria

4.1.1 Students will be taught, supervised, and mentored by a well-qualified and/or well-experienced academic staff with comprehensive knowledge of the field being taught. All disciplines require a combination of relevant experience and qualifications to achieve the minimum professional standard.

4.1.2 Academic staff who are assessed on a combination of professional experience and formal qualifications, rather than being AQF+1 qualified, should have a formal qualification that is at the same level (AQF). Professional experience can be used to demonstrate an overall equivalence of one qualification standard level above the formal qualification.

4.1.3 Exceptions to these requirements are available in certain circumstances (see HESF Standard 3.2.4), such as teaching a specialised component of a course of study, provided the staff members who do not fully meet the requirements of

the Standards are supervised by staff who do meet the Standard.

4.1.4 Professional experience, including any teaching experience, must be relevant to the discipline. Appropriate evidence and/or references must be collected and stored in the HR file of the staff member.

4.2 Additional Criteria

4.2.1 Any occasional guest lectures will be exempt from the requirement of being AQF+1 but must bring an expert level of knowledge and experience to the discipline being taught.

4.2.2 In circumstances that are not covered by these guidelines, the relevant Course Coordinator must put the case forward to and obtain approval from the Dean before the recruitment of any candidate. Any case submitted for approval must be evidence-based and must document the appropriate level and application of skills and knowledge as specified in the AQF for that level.

4.2.3 Teachers who teach specialised components of a course (for example, practical units that are highly specialised, or are instructing teachers currently undergoing training) who do not fully meet the standard for knowledge, skills and qualification or experience may have their teaching guided and overseen by staff who meet the standard.

4.3 Qualification and Experience Requirements – Academic Staff

4.3.1 The criteria below are considered minimum requirements. Additional evidence or standards that are appropriate for different disciplines of study may be required in such instances.

AQF Level being taught	Minimum required AQF level	Professional Experience Equivalent
Level 5 – Diploma	Level 7 – Bachelor's Degree	No equivalence recognised. The minimum requirement to teach at Acknowledge Education is a Bachelor's Degree.
Level 6 – Associate Degree, Advanced Diploma	Level 7 – Bachelor's Degree	No equivalence recognised. The minimum requirement to teach at Acknowledge Education is a Bachelor's Degree.
Level 7 – Bachelor's Degree	Level 8 – Bachelor Honours Degree, Graduate Certificate or Graduate Diploma	Level 7 – Bachelor's Degree and current registration to practise within the relevant professional body (if relevant). Plus either: 5 years of relevant teaching and/or professional experience in the past 10 years. Or Completion of at least two-thirds of a Master's Degree plus relevant teaching, research or professional experience totalling 3 years.
Level 8 – Bachelor Honours Degree, Graduate Certificate or Graduate	Level 9 – Master's Degree (Coursework) Master's Degree (Extended)	Level 8 – Bachelor Honours Degree, Graduate Certificate or Graduate Diploma Plus either: 5 years of relevant teaching and/or professional experience in the past 10 years

Diploma	Master's Degree (Research)	Or Completion of at least two-thirds of a PhD plus relevant teaching, research or professional experience totalling 3 years.
Level 9 – Master's Degree (Coursework) Master's Degree (Extended) Master's Degree (Research)	Level 10 Doctoral Degree	Level 9 – Master's Degree (Coursework) Master's Degree (Extended) Master's Degree (Research) Plus either: 5 years of relevant teaching and/or professional experience in the past 10 years Or Completion of at least two-thirds of a PhD plus relevant teaching, research or professional experience totalling 3 years.

5.0 Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 Course Coordinator

5.1.1 Responsible for assessing the qualifications and professional equivalence of academic staff members for the AQF level being taught.

5.1.2 Demonstrates adherence to the guidelines and criteria outlined in the policy, particularly when recruiting new teaching staff.

5.1.3 Responsible for submitting evidence-based cases for approval by the Dean prior to the recruitment of any candidate who does not meet the standard requirements.

5.2 Dean

5.2.1 Must be provided with details of the guidelines used by the Course Coordinator to assess individual staff members' qualifications and equivalences.

5.2.2 Responsible for maintaining appropriate records to ensure compliance with reporting responsibilities to TEQSA.

5.2.3 Advises on the assessment of exceptional cases or circumstances that are not covered by the guidelines.

5.3 Academic Staff

5.3.1 Responsible for ensuring they possess the necessary qualifications or equivalent experience to meet the quality and standards required by the program.

5.3.2 Responsible for providing certified evidence of and references for relevant professional experience, including teaching experience, in the discipline being taught.

5.4 Guest Lecturers

5.4.1 Exempt from the AQF+1 requirement but should bring an expert level of knowledge and experience to the discipline being taught.

5.5 Academic Teachers of Specialised Components

5.5.1 Teachers who do not fully meet the standard for knowledge, skills, qualifications, or experience in specialised components of a course may have their teaching guided and overseen by staff members who meet the standard.

5.6 HR Department

5.6.1 Responsible for collecting and storing appropriate evidence and references related to the professional experience of academic staff in their HR files.

6.0 Definitions

Term	Definition
Academic Staff	Individuals employed by Acknowledge Education Pty Ltd who are responsible for teaching higher education courses to students.
Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)	The national framework that defines the standards for qualifications in the Australian education system.
Course Coordinator	The staff member responsible for coordinating a specific course of study, overseeing the academic staff for that course, and ensuring compliance with the policy guidelines.
Equivalence	Refers to the demonstration of qualifications or experience that are considered comparable to the standards set by the AQF for a particular level of study.
Formal Qualifications	Educational degrees, diplomas, or certifications obtained through recognised educational institutions or professional bodies.
Guest Lecturers	Individuals who are invited to deliver lectures or presentations on a specific topic or discipline but may not be full-time academic staff.
Professional Experience	Practical knowledge, skills, and expertise gained through working in a specific profession or field.

7.0 Related Documents

Document Name
3.2.2 Academic Teaching, Training and Administrative Staff Policy and Procedures
3.2.3 Teaching Staff Engagement and Assessment Procedure
Staff Handbook

8.0 Policy Information

Policy Name	Higher Education Professional Equivalence Policy
Document Number	3.2.1
Purpose	Acknowledge Education's Higher Education Professional Equivalence Policy ensures that academic staff possess the necessary qualifications or equivalent experience to meet program standards, aligning with the Higher Education Standards Framework.
Audience	☒Staff | ☐Students| ☒Public
Category	3.0 Teaching
Subcategory	3.2 Staffing
Approval Date	28/10/2020
Effective Date	28/10/2020

Last Endorsed	04/06/2023
Policy Advisor	Narelle Whatley
Approving Authority	Academic Board
Date of Approval	31/05/2023 (circulation)
Next Review	Under review as at April 2026
Contact	Quality Assurance/Regulator Compliance Manager regulatorcompliance@ae.edu.au

9.0 Change Log

Date	Version	Version by	Notes
161027	1		Approved at December 2016 Academic Board
171027	1.1	ABennett	Minor formatting changes; document name change
180111	1.2	BSaporta	Reformat
201015	1.3	TWeir	Reviewed, added section 3.2.c, amended to reference HESF Standards
260523	1.4	Narelle Whatley (Dean)	Updated policy in line with new branding guidelines and policy template. Added level 8 and 9 AQF in anticipation of Master's Courses and Graduate Courses commencing. Added 4.1.3. Broadened the scope of definitions.

Appendix A

ACKNOWLEDGE EDUCATION

Application Form for Higher Education Qualification Equivalency

Assessment For Recruitment of Higher Education Academic Staff

Instructions for Completing this Application:
Thank you for your interest in seeking equivalency assessment for academic staff positions at Acknowledge Education. This form is designed to help you provide the necessary information and documentation for evaluation of your qualifications and experience.

Please complete the below form, taking care to ensure that you include the title of your highest qualification exactly as it appears on the qualification. Please be clear when detailing your teaching and professional experience. In the section of additional qualifications, please indicate whether you possess any additional qualifications, certifications, or degrees beyond your highest attained qualification. If yes, provide the details of the additional qualification, including the degree/certification, institution, and year of completion.

When completing the equivalency request section, please indicate the AQF level qualification that you hold and the equivalence that you are seeking to achieve from this application. Please bear in mind that academic teaching in higher education programs requires teaching staff to hold, or demonstrate equivalency for, one AQF level above the course that they are seeking to deliver.

Please ensure that you provide evidence of your qualifications that has been certified as true and accurate copies of the original documents by an authorized person (notary public or an official from AE). Applications without certified qualifications attached will not be considered.

Once you have completed the form and attached the required documents, submit the application to the Course Coordinator for further processing. You may be contacted for additional information if needed.

Please take care to accurately complete all sections of the form and provide certified copies of the necessary documents. Inaccurate or incomplete submissions may result in delays in processing your equivalency assessment request. If you have any questions or need assistance, feel free to contact the relevant department for guidance.

Personal Information:	
Full Name	
Email Address	
Contact Number	
Qualification Details	
Highest Qualification Attained	
Name of Institution	

Degree/Diploma:	
Year of Graduation	
Field of Study	
Teaching and Professional Experience: Please provide details of your relevant teaching and/or professional experience in the last 5 years.	
Position:	
Institution/Organisation	
Dates (From - To)	
Description of Responsibilities	
Position:	
Institution/Organisation	
Dates (From - To)	
Description of Responsibilities	
Position	
Institution/Organisation	
Dates (From - To)	
Description of Responsibilities:	
Additional Qualifications: Do you have any additional qualifications, certifications, or degrees beyond your highest attained qualification? If yes, please provide details.	
AQF Level Please select the AQF level and the corresponding higher AQF level for which you are seeking equivalency assessment:	
	Level 5 – Diploma → Level 6 – bachelor's degree
	Level 6 – Associate Degree, Advanced Diploma → Level 7 – Bachelor Degree
	Level 7 – Bachelor Degree → Level 8 – Bachelor Honours Degree, Graduate Certificate or Graduate Diploma
	Level 8 – Bachelor Honours Degree, Graduate Certificate or Graduate Diploma → Level 9 – Masters Degree (Coursework), Masters Degree (Extended), Masters Degree (Research)
	Level 9 – Masters Degree (Coursework), Masters Degree (Extended), Masters Degree (Research)
	Level 10 Doctoral Degree
Please provide a brief explanation of why you believe your qualifications and experience meet the requirements for equivalency as per the policy.	
Certification of Information:	

I certify that the information provided in this application is accurate and complete to the best of my knowledge.	
Signature of applicant	
Signature of witness	
Name and address of witness	

Supporting Documentation:
Please attach certified copies of your highest qualification, additional qualifications, and any relevant work experience references or certificates.

[ ] Certified copy of highest qualification
[ ] Certified copies of additional qualifications
[ ] Certified copies of work experience references or certificates
[ ] Name of two references of people who have directly line managed you and who are not a direct relative.