Equivalence of Experience and Expertise with Academic Qualification Levels Procedure

1 Purpose

To ensure that academic Employees with responsibilities for academic oversight and those with teaching and supervisory roles in Coursework Programs are appropriately qualified in the relevant discipline.

2 Scope

This Procedure applies to all current and prospective academic Employees, including casual and fixed-term academic Employees, with academic oversight, teaching and supervisory responsibilities in Coursework Programs and Courses, including Coursework Programs and Courses delivered by a Third Party Provider.

This Procedure does not apply to professional Employees, academic title holders, academic visitors and guest presenters, and professional placements or other forms of work integrated learning. Exceptions to these requirements may only be approved by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic and Research) and decisions must be documented and academically defensible.

Academic Employees supervising Higher Degree by Research (HDR) Students are subject to the Higher Degree by Research Supervision Procedure.

This Procedure is applicable to recognition of equivalence of equivalence to specific Academic Levels for the purposes of existing staff teaching into UniSQ courses. This does not confer equivalence for purposes of promotion or appointment to a given academic level.

3 Procedure Overview

This Procedure sets out the minimum academic qualifications or combination of academic qualifications, experience and expertise required to undertake academic oversight, teaching or supervisory roles and the process by which the University assesses and records that academic Employees meet the minimum requirements.

For the purposes of this Procedure, experience and expertise refer to experience and expertise obtained through the practice of a profession, including teaching experience, scholarship and professional practice, and from which the professional competency, knowledge, skills and Learning Outcomes achieved can be assessed.

This Procedure aligns with:

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- *Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021* (HESF): Standard 3.2 Staffing.

4 Procedures

4.1 Minimum criteria

Academic Employees with academic oversight, teaching or supervisory responsibilities in Coursework Programs, including Course Coordinator, Program Director or other learning and teaching leadership role, must have:

- a qualification in a relevant discipline at least one Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) level higher than the program being taught; or
- a qualification in a relevant discipline at least equivalent to the AQF level of the program being taught plus equivalent academic or professional or practice-based experience and expertise, supported by appropriate evidence.

Equivalence on a combination of formal qualifications and experience and expertise will be granted for one AQF level increment only and must be current and relevant to the subject matter being taught.

The minimum requirements for equivalence of experience and expertise with academic qualification levels are detailed in Table 1.

Where professional accreditation bodies set more stringent requirements for academic Employee qualifications and professional engagement, these must be satisfied in addition to the requirements in Table 1.

Table 1: Equivalence with Academic Qualification Levels Matrix

AQF Level of taught program	Minimum academic qualification level required	Minimum requirements to demonstrate equivalence of experience and expertise with the minimum academic qualification level
AQF Level 5 Diploma AQF Level 6 • Advanced Diploma	AQF Level 7 Bachelor Degree	Except in exceptional circumstances approved by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic and Research), the minimum qualification level to teach any Student enrolled in a program leading to a Higher Education award is a Bachelor Degree

• Associate Degree		
AQF Level 7 Bachelor Degree	AQF Level 8 • Bachelor Honours Degree • Graduate Certificate/Diploma	AQF Level 7 qualification in a relevant area and current registration or eligibility for registration, or equivalent, to practice within the relevant profession (if applicable) PLUS EITHER: Three (3) years of teaching and/or professional or practice-based experience in the last five (5) years aligned to the Learning Outcomes of the respective Course OR Enrolment in a relevant Level 8 or above qualification plus professional or practice-based experience together totalling three (3) years, aligned to the Learning Outcomes of the respective Course
AQF Level 8 • Bachelor Honours Degree • Graduate Certificate • Graduate Diploma	AQF Level 9 Masters Degree	AQF Level 8 qualification in a relevant area and current registration or eligibility for registration, or equivalent, to practice within the relevant profession (if applicable) PLUS EITHER: Five (5) years of teaching and/or professional or practice-based experience in the last 10 years aligned to the Learning Outcomes of the respective Course OR Enrolment in a relevant AQF Level 9 or 10 qualification plus professional or practice-based experience together

		totalling five (5) years, aligned to the Learning Outcomes of the respective Course
AQF Level 9 • Masters Degree (Coursework) • Masters Degree (Extended) • Juris Doctor	AQF Level 10 Doctoral Degree	AQF Level 9 qualification in a relevant area and current registration or eligibility for registration, or equivalent, to practice within the relevant profession (if applicable) PLUS EITHER: Five (5) years of teaching and/or professional or practice-based experience in the last 10 years aligned to the Learning Outcomes of the Course OR Enrolment in a relevant AQF Level 10 program plus professional or practice-based experience together totalling five (5) years aligned to the Learning Outcomes of the respective Course
AQF Level 10 Doctoral Degree	AQF Level 10 Doctoral Degree	Academic Employees supervising HDR Students are subject to the Higher Degree by Research Student Supervision Procedure and the Research Active Procedure.

Schools may develop guidelines consistent with this Procedure that provide a discipline specific approach to assessing whether claims of equivalency meet HESF standards. These guidelines must be approved by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic and Research) and reported to Education Committee.

4.2 Applying for equivalence

Applications for equivalence, including from academic Employees teaching through a Third Party Provider, are submitted via the ServiceHub to the Head of School for review.

The Head of School will provide a recommendation to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic and Research). The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic and Research) will consider the supporting evidence and recommendation and approve or not approve the equivalence of

qualification.

4.2.1 Verifiable evidence

Verifiable evidence to be considered when assessing the professional experience of an individual may include but is not limited to:

- relevant workplace or practice-based experiences
- teaching experience including teaching at lower AQF levels, conducting professional development seminars and giving public lectures
- testimonials, awards, or other recognition that acknowledges leadership or expertise in the discipline area
- contributions to the discipline through participation in advisory boards or professional networks
- managing significant projects relevant to the discipline area
- performing in a role that requires higher order judgement and the provision of expert advice
- leadership in the development of professional standards
- peer reviewed publications, books or reports, conference or seminar presentations in the discipline area.

4.2.2 Application outcomes

The decision of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic and Research) will be provided to the applicant, Head of School, relevant Human Resources area and, where appropriate, Third Party Provider.

Where the evidence is assessed as demonstrating equivalence, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic and Research) will determine:

- the Field(s) of Education relevant to the applicant's experience and expertise
- time-limited requirements for participation in professional development and scholarly activities or progress towards completion of a relevant AQF+1 level program, where applicable
- the date at which the equivalence should be reviewed, normally every three years.

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In the case of new academic Employees, this information and any other requirements or conditions of appointment will be detailed in the Letter of Offer.

Decisions and supporting documents will be recorded in accordance with the University's approved Records and Information Management Policy and Procedure and the Enterprise Information Management Framework.

The Head of School is responsible for regular assessment of all relevant Course allocations to confirm that academic Employees with academic oversight, teaching or supervisory responsibilities meet HESF requirements, including that they are teaching in a Field of Education covered by the equivalence assessment.

4.3 Supervised Teaching

On the approval of the Head of School, academic Employees assessed as not fully meeting the standard for knowledge, skills, qualification or experience required for teaching may teach under the supervision of an academic Employee who meets the standard. This includes academic Employees engaged to teach specialised components of a program because of their specialised expertise but who do not meet the general requirements of the HESF.

Tutors not responsible for Course Coordination who work under the guidance of a Course Coordinator and deliver tutorial or workshop classes require qualifications to at least the same level as the program being taught, plus suitable support or supervision relevant to professional experience and appropriate teaching methods.

Ongoing monitoring of these cases will be documented in the approved University system, including a supervision plan developed in consultation with an appropriately qualified Employee and reviewed at least annually by the Head of School.

4.4 Complaints and Grievances

Academic Employees who are dissatisfied with an outcome or Decision made under this Procedure should follow the process outlined in the Employee Complaints Procedure.

4.5 Reporting

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic and Research) is responsible for submission of an annual report to Academic Board on the outcomes of this procedure, including the effectiveness of monitoring and evaluation processes.

5 References

Nil.

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6 Schedules

This procedure must be read in conjunction with its subordinate schedules as provided in the table below.

7 Procedure Information

Accountable Officer	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic and Research)
Responsible Officer	Chief People Officer
Policy Type	University Procedure
Policy Suite	Learning and Teaching Policy
Subordinate Schedules	
Approved Date	21/7/2026
Effective Date	2/1/2026
Review Date	28/2/2029
Relevant Legislation	Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021
Policy Exceptions	Policy Exceptions Register
Related Policies	Academic Programs and Courses Quality Policy Educational Partnerships Policy Higher Degree by Research Student Policy
Related Procedures	Course Management Procedure Course Quality Assurance and Review Procedure Coursework Program Quality Assurance and Review Procedure Employee Complaints Procedure Higher Degree by Research Supervision Procedure Records and Information Management Procedure Research Active Procedure
Related forms, publications and websites	TEQSA Guidance Note Determining Equivalence of Professional Experience to Academic Qualifications

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	Australian Qualifications Framework Enterprise Information Management Framework
Definitions	**Terms defined in the Definitions Dictionary**
	Course A discrete element of a program, normally undertaken over a single Study Period, in which the Student enrols, and on completion of which the Student is awarded a grade. Course Coordinator Responsibilities of Course Coordinators include but are not limited to: Course planning, design and development Course Specifications and alignment with Program Learning Outcomes Assessment design, implementation and marking Course delivery and Student learning experiences by providing Student support leadership and guidance of teaching teams engagement with professional and accreditation bodies ensuring currency of disciplinary and content knowledge and expertise reflecting on evaluations for the purpose of quality enhancement of Courses. Coursework Program A sequence of study consisting predominantly of Coursework. Employee A person employed by the University and whose conditions of employment are covered by the Enterprise Agreement and includes persons employed on a continuing, fixed term or casual basis. Employees also include senior Employees whose conditions of employment are covered by a written agreement or contract with the University. Enrolment The process of admitting Students to one or more Courses for the current Academic Year. Grievance Typically defined as a concern or Complaint raised by an Employee against a process, action, omission or Decision within the responsibility and control of the University which relates to employment or related internal People Portfolio matters, which has or is likely to have an unreasonable negative impact on the ability of an

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Employee to undertake their duties, or similar impact on their career.

Head of School/College

An academic staff member responsible for the administration of the Course offerings in one or more discipline areas.

Higher Degree by Research (HDR) Student

A Student enrolled in an HDR program.

Learning Outcomes

The expression of the set of knowledge, skills and the application of the knowledge and skills a person has acquired and is able to demonstrate as a result of learning.

Policy Instrument

A Policy Instrument refers to an instrument that is governed by the Policy framework. These include Policies, Procedures and Schedules.

Procedure

An operational instruction that sets out the process to operationalise a Policy.

Research

Research is the creation of new knowledge and/or the use of existing knowledge in a new and creative way to generate new concepts, methodologies, inventions and understandings. This could include the synthesis and analysis of previous research to the extent that it is new and creative.

Student

A person who is enrolled in a UniSQ Upskill Course or who is admitted to an Award Program or Non-Award Program offered by the University and is: currently enrolled in one or more Courses or study units; or not currently enrolled but is on an approved Leave of Absence or whose admission has not been cancelled.

Third Party Provider

A party with which the University has a Third Party Arrangement for the purposes of delivering some or all of a higher education program

	that leads to the award of an Australian regulated higher education qualification. University The term 'University' or 'UniSQ' means the University of Southern Queensland.
	Definitions that relate to this procedure only
Keywords	Equivalence of experience and expertise, academic qualifications and levels, academic Employees, supervised teaching, Australian Qualifications Framework, Third Party Provider
Record No	22/544PL

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