

## Health Education and Training Institute Higher Education Recognition of Equivalence of Professional Experience to Academic Qualifications Policy

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<b>Summary</b>	Outlines the Health Education and Training Institute Higher Education Policy guidelines for assessment of professional equivalence for the purpose of appointing academic teaching staff.
<b>Keywords</b>	Professional equivalence, professional experience, assessment, academic qualifications, clinical practice, professional development, accreditation
<b>Authoring Portfolio</b>	Mental Health
<b>Contact</b>	Director
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<b>Distribution</b>	Higher Education
<b>Applies to</b>	Higher Education
<b>Related documents</b>	Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) Provider Course Accreditation Standards - Section 4.2 Health Education and Training Institute Higher Education Graduate Attributes Policy Health Education and Training Institute Higher Education Academic Quality Assurance Policy Health Education and Training Institute Higher Education Academic Quality Assurance Framework Register of Academic Teaching Staff
<b>Review date</b>	February 2023
<b>Risk Assessment</b>	As per Attachment 1 to this document.

**Issued under the authority of the Health Education and Training Institute Higher Education Governing Council**

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# Health Education and Training Institute Higher Education Recognition of Equivalence of Professional Experience to Academic Qualifications Policy

## Policy Statement

Health Education and Training Institute (HETI) Higher Education is committed to ensuring that academic staff appointed to teach students are appropriately qualified in the relevant discipline for their level of teaching. This policy provides criteria for the appropriate evaluation 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 applies to all staff who teach within HETI Institute Higher Education.

## Aims and Objectives

1. The objectives of this Academic Equivalence Policy Statement are to:
  - a. Ensure that processes for appointing academic teaching staff at HETI Institute Higher Education are in accord with the TEQSA Provider Course Accreditation Standards (4.2), are consistent with the Mission and Vision of HETI Institute Higher Education, and enable students to attain the relevant Graduate Attributes;
  - b. Provide guidance to support the appointment of teaching staff and any ongoing professional development required to meet the requirements of this policy;
  - c. Provide assurance to students that their teaching staff are suitably qualified.

## Scope

2. The policy applies to current or prospective academic staff teaching students enrolled in coursework units or programs, employed by HETI Institute Higher Education.

## Overview

3. Students of HETI Institute Higher Education are assured that their teaching staff are suitably qualified. This suitability will be generally based on the appointment of teachers who are qualified in the particular field of study at a level more advanced than the level of the program being taught. Where a subject has a research component, the staff member teaching the research component will be required to demonstrate that they have relevant research skills and demonstrated research experience (peer reviewed and published).
4. HETI Institute Higher Education will engage teachers using the criteria of equivalencies in clinical or other experience as required. This will include recognition of the AQF equivalencies of health related professional qualifications such as:
  - a. Fellowship of respective Colleges for medical practitioners and associated membership for other relevant health professionals; and
  - b. Attainment of defined senior health related professional positions. The recognition of equivalent professional experience is an essential feature of teacher attributes for HETI Institute Higher Education;
  - c. The learning outcomes for HETI Institute Higher Education courses of study are such that they require currency in expert practice to ensure the building of student capabilities in identified professional practice.
5. HETI Institute Higher Education will have clear procedures and delegations that guide the determination of professional equivalency in experience and skills. They will inform how such professional attributes are assessed in terms of their equivalence to the AQF level in supporting students to attain HETI Institute Higher Education Graduate Attributes, and the knowledge and skills established in the learning outcomes of programs staff may be involved in teaching. This will ensure that HETI Institute Higher Education teaching staff will bring both academic rigour and cutting edge clinical practice to their teaching roles.
6. The following categories of staff will be exempt from the requirements to demonstrate equivalence of professional experience as defined in this policy, but must have a level of knowledge and expertise that will demonstrably enhance the learning experiences of students:
  - a. Occasional guest lecturers/academics;
  - b. Academic staff who do not teach more than one-third of the subject in any unit topic;

- c. Consumers, carers or community members who contribute to the teaching of a course will have personal experience relevant to the learning outcomes of the course being taught and sufficient teaching experience to contribute to students attaining the required outcomes.

There may be special circumstances not covered by these guidelines. In such a circumstance an individual case must be made regarding the attributes of the staff member that enable them to be considered to have a level of knowledge and expertise that will demonstrably enhance the learning experiences of students.

All academics, including occasional lecturers, will have access to training to support their ability to deliver teaching consistent with the aims of this policy.

7. HETI Institute Higher Education will have clear procedures for monitoring the qualifications of all teaching staff against the guidelines on equivalence of professional experience in this policy; and the implications of this for student experience, academic staff recruitment and professional development.

## **Definitions**

8. For the purpose of this policy:
  - a. Currency refers to the period of time during which relevant professional experience in evidence based practice continues to be valid, and is specified in the equivalence criteria outlined in Table 1 and Table 2.
  - b. Equivalent professional qualification is the attainment of health related professional qualifications or defined senior health related professional positions that have been formally determined by Health Education Training Institute Higher Education to have defined AQF equivalency.
  - c. Equivalence of professional experience comprises the professional practice and teaching experience that an individual demonstrates that is determined to be equivalent to the academic knowledge and skills required to have expertise in a field of study at a level more advanced than the level of the course being taught.

## **Minimum Requirements for the Qualifications of Academic Teaching Staff**

9. Table 1: Describes the minimum requirements for equivalence; additional evidence of AQF standards may be required to be specified for specific positions to meet the needs of students within relevant courses. Except in exceptional circumstances, all teaching staff considered to have equivalence of professional experience will hold an AQF Level 7 (Bachelors) Degree.

<b>Table 1*</b>		
<b>AQF Level Being Taught</b>	<b>AQF Qualifications Of Teaching Staff</b>	<b>HETI Higher Education Guidelines on Equivalence of Professional Experience</b>
<b>Level 8, Graduate Certificate, Graduate Diploma</b>	Level 9 – Masters by Research or Coursework	<p>AQF Level 9 equivalent professional qualification, <b>OR</b> AQF Level 8 or equivalent professional qualification and current professional membership or registration to practice within the relevant health area <b>PLUS ONE OF THE FOLLOWING:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5 years relevant teaching, research and/or professional experience in the last 10 years.</li> </ul> <p><b>OR</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completion of at least two-thirds of a relevant AQF level 9 (Masters) course <b>PLUS</b> some relevant teaching, research and/or professional experience, together totalling 5 years, <b>OR</b> at least one of the sources of evidence of relevant professional experience listed in <b>Table 2.</b></li> </ul>
<b>Level 9 Masters Degree (Coursework)</b>	Level 10 – Doctorate by Research or Coursework	<p>AQF Level 10 equivalent professional qualification <b>OR</b> AQF Level 9 or equivalent professional qualification and current professional membership or registration to practice within the relevant health area <b>PLUS ONE OF THE FOLLOWING:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5 years relevant teaching, research and/or professional experience in the last 10 years.</li> </ul> <p><b>OR</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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 <b>OR</b> at least two of the sources of evidence of relevant professional experience listed in <b>Table 2.</b></li> </ul>

\* Adapted from Charles Sturt University Academic Equivalence Policy

10. In assessing equivalence of professional experience it must be determined that the individual has both:
  - a. Evidence that supports the teaching capabilities of the individual at a given level;

- b. Evidence of expertise in practice application relevant to the HETI Institute Higher Education Graduate Attributes and learning outcomes of the course being taught.

<b>Table 2 **</b>
<b>Evidence that may be considered when assessing the professional experience of an individual:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. evidence of leadership in the development of professional standards;</li> <li>b. performing in roles at a senior level (other than determined as an equivalent professional qualification);</li> <li>c. performing in a role (other than determined as an equivalent professional qualification) that requires high order judgement and the provision of expert advice;</li> <li>d. managing significant projects in the field;</li> <li>e. testimonials, awards or other recognition that acknowledges leadership or expertise in the field of education;</li> <li>f. contributions in the field of study through participation in advisory boards and professional networks;</li> <li>g. peer reviewed publications in the field of study;</li> <li>h. other publications such as books and reports;</li> <li>i. leadership or management of research acknowledged by peers.</li> </ul>

\*\* Adapted from the TEQSA Guidance Note: Equivalence of professional experience to academic qualifications

## Procedures

11. Included in all appointment of teaching staff will be the review of the appropriateness of their qualifications to teach to the specified learning outcomes of any HETI Institute Higher Education program.
12. As required any determination of a professional equivalence to a nominated AQF level for the purposes of teaching will be made based upon the holding of appropriate professional qualifications or positions in relation to the program learning outcomes.
13. This review will include consideration of:
  - a. Knowledge, skills, and application of knowledge and skills to the relevant AQF level; and
  - b. Relevance to supporting students in attaining HETI Institute Higher Education Graduate Attributes, TEQSA and AQF specifications for a Graduate Certificate, Graduate Diploma or Masters Award.



14. A Register of Academic Teaching Staff will be maintained with evidence of the staff qualifications, and/or equivalence of professional experience to AQF Levels. The Register will be reviewed annually by the Academic Board.
15. This policy and procedure will be applied from 1 January 2017 to all new academic staff appointments as well as New South Wales Institute of Psychiatry academic staff transitioning to HETI Institute Higher Education.
16. If any transitioning staff member does not fulfil the requirements of this policy they will be supported to meet the requirements within one year from transition.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

17. The Academic Board (or nominees) is responsible for:
  - a. Approving the determination of equivalence to AQF level (for the purpose of teaching within HETI Institute Higher Education) of a nominated health related professional qualification or senior health related professional position;
  - b. Approving the determination of equivalence of professional experience of any staff member nominated for employment under “special circumstances not covered by these guidelines”;
  - c. Prior to the commencement of the academic year conduct an annual review of the Register of Academic Teaching Staff and providing advice regarding implications for student experience, academic staff recruitment and professional development.
18. The Director Education and Training, and/or the Director Psychiatry and Mental Health Programs, is responsible for:
  - a. Making recommendation to the Academic Board for approval for the determination of equivalence of professional experience for new staff who require such a determination under this policy, other than “special circumstances not covered by these guidelines”;
  - b. Nominating, with rationale, (in consultation with relevant senior academic staff):
    - i) Health related professional qualifications and/or senior health related professional positions as equivalent professional qualifications,
    - ii) Staff members recommended for determination of equivalence of professional experience related to “special circumstances not covered by these guidelines”.
  - c. Overseeing the maintenance of a current Register of Academic Teaching Staff;

- d. Initiating, including through delegation, any actions required in response to advice from the Academic Board after review of the Register of Academic Teaching Staff;
  - e. In the event that an academic staff member has not maintained currency of qualifications, a staff development plan will need to be implemented to enable compliance with this policy over an agreed period of time, not exceeding 6 months.
19. The Director Education and Training is responsible for:
- a. Determining that people recruited to teach under the following categories have a level of knowledge and expertise that will demonstrably enhance the learning experiences of students:
    - i) Occasional guest lecturers/ academics;
    - ii) Academics who do not teach more than one-third (up to a maximum 6 teaching weeks) of the subject in any unit topic;
    - iii) Consumers, carers or community members, and
  - b. The Pathways Learning Managers are responsible for maintaining the Register of Academic Teaching Staff for all teaching staff within the framework for which they are responsible.

## **Related Documents**

- Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) Provider Course Accreditation Standards - Section 4.2
- HETI Institute Higher Education Graduate Attributes Policy
- HETI Institute Higher Education Academic Quality Assurance Policy
- HETI Institute Higher Education Academic Quality Assurance Framework
- Register of Academic Teaching Staff

## **References / Documents utilised in developing this policy**

- TEQSA Guidance Note: Equivalence of professional experience to academic qualifications.
- Australian Qualifications Framework (2013)
- Charles Sturt University – Academic Staff Teaching Qualifications and Equivalent Professional Experience Policy (2015)
- University of Canberra – Recognition of Equivalence in Academic Staff Policy (2014)
- College of Law – Academic Equivalence Policy (2014)
- Australian Government 2014 Higher Education Standards Framework, Section 3.

## DOCUMENT HISTORY

Version	Issued	Status	Author	Reason for Change
v0.1	2 August 2016	Draft	Paul van Hauen	Draft document
v0.2	15 August 2016	Draft	Paul van Hauen	Incorporating feedback from 1 <sup>st</sup> draft circulation
v0.3	16 August 2016	Draft	Paul van Hauen	Amendments following feedback from T&L Comm.
v0.4	26 August 2016	Draft	Paul van Hauen	Amendments following HEEG and Academic Board Meeting
v1.0	29 August 2016	Final	Paul van Hauen	Approved
v1.0	22 August 2018	Final	Valerie Rhodes	Updated logos, template and new TRIM Reference
v1.1	03 February 2020	Noted	Susan Grimes	Organisational changes; new position title, and responsibilities. Noted by the T&L Committee. Changes in responsibilities noted by the T&L Committee.
v1.1	14 February 2020	Final	-	Published

## IMPLEMENTATION CHECKLIST – COMPLIANCE SELF ASSESSMENT

<b>Assessed by:</b>	<b>Date of Assessment:</b>		
<b>IMPLEMENTATION REQUIREMENTS</b>	<b>Not commenced</b>	<b>Partial compliance</b>	<b>Full compliance</b>
1.			
	<b>Notes:</b>		
2.			
	<b>Notes: Relevant Director</b>		
3.			
	<b>Notes: TRIM reference number -</b>		
4.			
	<b>Notes:</b>		
5.			
6.			
	<b>Notes:</b>		

## Attachment 1 - RISK ASSESSMENT

### <Document Title>

1.	Policy/Process being assessed	Notes
	Recognition of Equivalence of Professional Experience to Academic Qualifications	
	Document Number	
	Publication date	June 2019
	Scheduled review date	
	Date of this risk assessment	
	Name & position of assessing officer	
2.	Summary of policy purpose (from PD Cover Page)	
	Outlines the HETI Institute Higher Education Policy guidelines for assessment of professional equivalence for the purpose of appointing academic teaching staff.	
3.	Agency (HETI) key roles & responsibilities as per PD	
4.	Risk Assessment	
4.1	Identification of risks – what might happen & how?	
	1.	
	2.	
4.2	Analysis of risks – combined estimate of the consequence & likelihood of the risk, using NSW Health Risk Matrix (attached)	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consequence:</li> <li>• Likelihood:</li> <li>• Risk rating :</li> </ul>	
4.3	Evaluation of risks – comparison of the level of risk as determined against a predetermined criteria to determine whether a level of risk is acceptable or needs to be treated.	
	Risk level assessed after implementing treatment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consequence:</li> <li>• Likelihood:</li> <li>• Risk rating :</li> </ul> Evaluation –	

### Risk Assessment Approval

Name & position of approving T2 Officer:	
Date:	