



## **GUIDELINES FOR DETERMINING THE EQUIVALENCE OF PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE TO AUSTRALIAN QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK LEVELS FOR ACADEMIC STAFF**

### **Purpose**

The Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) requires staff teaching in programs within the higher education sector to hold a qualification which is at least one Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) level higher than the course that they teach (“AQF+1”) or they should have equivalent professional experience. These guidelines are provided to enable Australian Institute of Business (AIB) to assess the equivalence to AQF qualifications of the professional experience of its academic staff who do not have the required level of qualification.

### **Scope**

This policy applies to academic staff who teach students face to face (through lectures or workshops) or online in AIB coursework degrees and who are employed either by AIB or under third party arrangements by its teaching centres.

The policy does not apply to academic staff who are involved in the supervision of candidates enrolled in AIB’s higher degrees by research courses; such staff and their required qualifications are addressed in the AIB Research Degrees Procedures.

### **Details**

- 1.1 Although academic staff will normally have the requisite level of qualification, without the need to rely on professional experience to demonstrate equivalence, it is recognised that some disciplines require a combination of experience and qualifications to achieve expert-level professional standards.
- 1.2 Academic staff who are assessed on a combination of formal qualifications and professional experience must have formal qualifications to at least the same level as that being taught. Professional experience will only be used to assess one qualification standard level above that being taught.
- 1.3 Professional experience must be current and relevant to the area being taught.
- 1.4 In respect of Diploma (AQF Level 5), Associate Degree (AQF Level 6) and Bachelor courses/subjects (AQF Level 7), academic staff will have a minimum AQF Level 9 qualification.
- 1.5 In respect of Graduate Certificate in Management or Graduate Diploma in Management courses/subjects (AQF Level 8), academic staff will have a minimum of:
  - (a) an AQF Level 9 Masters by research or coursework, or
  - (b) an AQF Level 8 qualification, and
    - (i) At least 5 years relevant professional experience in the last 10 years, or

- (ii) Enrolment in a relevant doctoral program plus some relevant professional experience together totally at least 5 years.
- 1.6 In respect of the AIB Master's courses/subjects (AQF Level 9), academic staff will have a minimum of:
  - (a) an AQF Level 10 Doctorate by research or coursework, or
  - (b) an AQF Level 9 qualification, and
    - (i) At least 5 years relevant professional experience at a senior level in the last 10 years, or
    - (ii) Enrolment in a relevant doctoral program plus some relevant senior professional experience together totally at least 5 years.
- 1.7 Exceptions to the above sections 1.4, 1.5 and 1.6 may include the following:
  - (a) Occasional guest lecturers will be exempt from the requirement to being AQF+1 but must be able to bring a level of knowledge and expertise which will add value to the teaching of the relevant discipline area.
  - (b) Academics who have taught in the same discipline for at least 5 years, at the same level or higher, with AIB or another higher education provider.
  - (c) There may be other circumstances not covered by these guidelines and such cases will require the approval from the Academic Director or nominee ("Academic Director") and must provide evidence and document the appropriate level of skills, knowledge and the application of skills and knowledge as specified in the AQF for that level.
- 1.8 The Academic Director is responsible for employment of AIB academic staff and therefore must be satisfied that where candidates have a formal qualification which is at the same AQF level as the course which they are applying to teach, the combination of their formal qualifications and their professional experience will provide them with the appropriate knowledge and level of skills to enable them to undertake the nominated teaching roles to AIB students.
- 1.9 The Academic Director is responsible for oversight and approval of appointments of academic staff under third party arrangements by its teaching centres to ensure that they meet the qualification standards set out in this policy for the academic role or roles they are employed to undertake.
- 1.10 The Academic Director must demonstrate how an AIB academic staff member's equivalence claims for the relevant AQF level have been assessed as part of any appointment process.
- 1.11 The Academic Director must provide Human Resources with details of the guidelines used by AIB in assessing equivalences as well as details of how each individual academic staff member was assessed as meeting these guidelines.
- 1.12 Human Resources must maintain appropriate records.
- 1.13 In preparing a case the Academic Director may assess broader skills or qualifications such as the following:
  - (a) research and/or creative work/projects at an advanced level;
  - (b) publications, presentations and conference participation
  - (c) experience outside tertiary education in industry, business or government employment; and
  - (d) leadership in local, state or national advisory bodies and/or community organisations.

1.14 Where an individual academic staff member does not strongly meet all of the criteria set out in this policy, the Academic Director shall put in place an appropriate and documented plan of strategies, including mentoring by, and team teaching with, fully qualified academic staff. The purpose of the plan is to enable the individual to successfully transition to the requirements of this policy.

**Related Forms:**

Nil

**Responsibility:**

Academic Director

**Related Policies:**

Nil

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