

# ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE POLICY

## 1. Purpose

Ikon Institute of Australia (Ikon) strives to be an acclaimed institute of higher education, with all courses taught by highly qualified and experienced academic staff. Ikon is committed to employing high quality staff from a range of backgrounds and ensuring that they have the support to develop as teachers and leaders in the higher education sector.

This policy outlines the standards and criteria for assessing the professional experience of academic staff involved in teaching and academic supervisory roles which are connected with Ikon's award courses. Further, it sets out the ways that Ikon shall ensure that academic staff undertaking teaching and academic supervisory roles are appropriately qualified in the field/discipline in which they teach or assess.

## 2. Scope

This policy applies to all Ikon academic staff teaching or assessing TEQSA accredited higher education courses within the Australian Qualification Framework. This policy also reflects the *Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021*.

## 3. Related Documents

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following Ikon policies:

- Governance Guidelines
- Workforce Plan
- Scholarly Activity Framework

All policies and forms associated with this policy can be found in the Staff Policy Library in Canvas.

## 4. Definitions

**"Academic Staff"** means Academic Dean, Heads of School, Heads of Faculty, Course and Subject Coordinators, Lecturers and Tutors.

**"Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)"** are the national guidelines that regulate Australian post-compulsory education and training qualifications. The framework identifies learning outcomes for each AQF level and qualification, policy requirements, educational and economic objectives, governing and monitoring arrangements.

**"AQF levels"** are an indication of the relative complexity and/or depth of achievement and the autonomy required to demonstrate that achievement. AQF level 1 has the lowest complexity and AQF level 10 has the highest complexity.

**"Professional Experience"** means experience 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.

**"Qualified"** means qualified to at least one AQF level higher than the course of study being

taught or have professional experience equivalent to at least one AQF level higher than the Policy Category Policy/guideline/procedure/rules.

“**Research**” is the systematic experimental and theoretical work, application and/or development that results in an advancement of knowledge.

“**Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA)**” is Australia’s regulatory and quality agency for higher education. TEQSA’s primary aim is to ensure that students receive high quality education at any Australian higher education provider.

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### 5. Principles

- 5.1 Higher education students are entitled to expect that they are being taught by someone who is qualified in the particular field of education or field of study at a level more advanced than the level of the course being taught, and that the teacher’s expertise has been clearly established through an assessment of formal academic qualifications, equivalent professional experience, or a combination of both.
- 5.2 Ikon requires academic staff who are employed or contracted to teach or undertake academic or teaching and learning supervisory roles to be appropriately qualified in the discipline in which they are engaged.
- 5.3 To comply with the Threshold Standards all academic staff shall have:
  - a qualification in a relevant discipline at least one AQF qualification level higher than the course of study being taught, OR
  - equivalent relevant academic or professional or practice-based experience and expertise, AND
  - knowledge of contemporary developments in their specific discipline or field, be actively engaged in continuing professional development, scholarship, research, or knowledge of contemporary teaching, learning and assessment relevant to their discipline, role, modes of delivery and the specific needs of student cohorts.
- 5.4 For those assessed under the criteria of equivalent academic, professional or practice-based experience, staff shall have acquired sufficient professional experience working in the relevant field or industry:
  - equivalent professional experience that demonstrates achievement of specific knowledge and skills relevant to the role; and
  - a minimum of five years current and appropriate industry experience.
- 5.5 Ikon recognises that some discipline areas require a combination of registration, industry or professional experiences and qualifications to achieve expert-level professional standards. In such cases, the relevant professional and industry experience would be used to assess the equivalence of being one AQF level above that being taught.
- 5.6 All academic staff are to be fully informed of the requirements for delivering relevant Ikon higher education courses and have approval for delivering higher education subjects in accordance with this policy before undertaking any of those activities.
- 5.7 The criteria below are considered the minimum qualifications or professional equivalence for academic staff teaching and assessing Ikon’s courses.

Subject/ Course AQF Qualification Level being taught	Minimum staff AQF Qualification Level	Professional Experience Equivalence Criteria
<p><b>Level 7</b> <i>Bachelor Degree</i></p>	<p><b>Level 8</b> Bachelor Honours Degree, Graduate Certificate, Graduate Diploma</p>	<p>AQF Level 7 plus current registration (or equivalent) to practice within a relevant profession</p> <p><b>With either</b> Minimum 5 years relevant professional full- time experience in a relevant field and/or discipline area, together with a sound understanding of current scholarship in the discipline and demonstrated ability to engage students in intellectual inquiry</p> <p><b>or</b> Enrolment in a relevant AQF Level 8 program plus relevant professional experience, together totaling 3 years.</p>
<p><b>Level 8</b> <i>Graduate Certificate, Graduate Diploma</i></p>	<p><b>Level 9</b> Masters by research or coursework</p>	<p>AQF Level 8 plus current registration (or equivalent) to practice within a relevant profession</p> <p><b>With either</b> Minimum 10 years relevant professional full- time experience in a relevant field and/or discipline area, together with a sound understanding of current scholarship in the discipline and demonstrated ability to engage students in intellectual inquiry</p> <p><b>or</b> Enrolment in a relevant AQF Level 9 program plus relevant professional experience, together totaling 5 years.</p>
<p><b>Level 9</b> <i>Masters Degree (Coursework)</i></p>	<p><b>Level 10</b> Doctorate by research or coursework</p>	<p>AQF Level 9 plus current registration (or equivalent) to practice within a relevant profession</p> <p><b>With either</b> Minimum 10 years relevant professional full- time experience in a relevant field and/or discipline area, together with a sound understanding of current scholarship in the discipline and demonstrated ability to engage students in intellectual inquiry</p> <p><b>or</b> Enrolment in a relevant AQF Level 10 program, plus relevant professional experience, together totaling 5 years.</p>

## 6. Assessing Professional Equivalence

- 6.1 The evidence considered when assessing the professional experience of an individual may include evidence of:
- leadership in the development of professional standards
  - performing in a role that requires high order judgement and the provision of expert advice, or roles at a senior level
  - managing significant projects in the field
  - testimonials, awards, or other recognition that acknowledges leadership or expertise in the field of education
  - contributions in the field of education through participation in advisory boards and professional networks
  - peer reviewed publications in the field of education
  - other publications such as books and reports
  - leadership or management of research acknowledged by peers.
- 6.2 Where an individual staff member may not yet strongly meet all of the criteria outlined in this policy, there will be an explicit and time-limited professional development plan, or other strategies put in place such as mentoring or team teaching, to enable the individual to make the transition to academic teaching successfully. In the case where teachers are engaged on a continuing basis to teach specialised components of a course because of their specialised expertise, but do not fully meet the general requirements, they are to be supervised by staff who do meet the requirements

## 7. Exemptions

- 7.1 The above qualification requirements do not apply to:
- guest lecturers, teachers or instructors who teach one-third or less of one subject in any teaching session.
  - Fa staff member of a placement provider may supervise a student's workplace learning placement for a professionally accredited course and assess their performance on behalf of the lkon if the placement provider staff member:
    - holds the level of professional registration to which the course leads (regardless of the [Australian Qualifications Framework](#) level of their professional qualification), and
    - has substantial professional experience.
  - a student undertaking a later year of a bachelor or integrated bachelor (honours) course who tutors and/or assesses in introductory subjects of the same course, provided that their tutoring and assessment is guided and moderated by staff who hold the requisite level of qualification.
- 7.2 Where an academic staff member does not hold the required level of qualification to teach in a course, they must either:
- have been assessed as having a combination of qualification(s), experience, and achievements equivalent to the required level of qualification, or
  - have substantial experience in the industry or profession for which the course or subject prepares students and be closely supervised in their teaching and assessment by an academic staff member who does hold the required level of qualification or equivalent.

## 8. Publications

This policy is published in the [Policies and Procedures](#) section of the Ikon website and available to all staff via the Policy Library in Canvas.

### Policy Information & History

Policy Category	Academic, Quality Assurance
Policy ID	QU021A
Approved by	Academic Board
Date of Approval	27 October 2021
Endorsed by	Teaching and Learning Committee
Date of Endorsement	13 October 2021
Previous Versions	New policy
Next Review Date	October 2024
Government Legislation	<a href="#">Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011</a> <a href="#">Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021</a> <a href="#">Higher Education Support Act 2003</a> <a href="#">National Code 2018</a> <a href="#">Australian Qualifications Framework (2013)</a>
Responsible Officer	Dean
Sources:	In developing this policy, the following documents were considered:  TEQSA Guidance Note: <a href="#">Determining Equivalence of Professional Experience and Academic Qualifications, Version 2.2 (11 October 2017)</a>  TEQSA Guidance Note: <a href="#">Staffing, Learning Resources and Educational Support, Version 1.3 (22 November 2017)</a>
Benchmarking:	External referencing activities were conducted against comparable providers and best practice using publicly available information for: Charles Sturt University, Kaplan Business School, Australian National Institute of Management and Commerce, and the International College of Management.