

Staff Qualifications and Equivalence Policy and Procedure

Approving body	Academic Board
Date approved	12 August 2026
Date of effect	Commencement of operation
Next scheduled review	Two years from when policy commencement
Policy owner	Academic Dean
Policy contact	Academic Dean
Related Documents	Learning and Teaching Plan Position Description – Course Coordinator Position Description – Lecturer Position Description – Academic Dean Position Description – Student Learning Support Officer Delegations Policy and Schedule
Higher Education Standards Framework (HESF) 2021 (Cth)	HESF 2021 — ss.3.2.1, 3.2.2, 3.2.3, 6.1.1, 6.2.1, 6.3.1, 6.3.2, 6.3.3 Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011 (Cth) (TEQSA Act) Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 (Cth) (ESOS Act) Education Services for Overseas Students Regulations 2019 (Cth)

Purpose

- This Policy and Procedure outlines the framework under which **Zenith Innovation Institute (Zenith / the Institute)**:
 - sets minimum qualifications for the recruitment of academic staff;
 - assesses the equivalency of professional experience of an applicant who does not possess the usual minimum qualifications; and
 - establishes appropriate supervision arrangements for staff who are recruited on the basis of equivalency.

Scope

- This Policy and Procedure apply to:

- (a) all existing staff, academic and corporate (full-time, part-time, casual or contract); and
- (b) all prospective staff.

Policy

Principle

3. The Institute recognises that:
 - (a) both academic and broader credentials of its academic staff are critical in assuring the quality of its courses; and
 - (b) relevant professional skills may complement academic qualifications when determining the suitability of an individual to teach its courses and support the provision of a career-oriented learning environment.
4. Academic staff candidates are assessed in relation to discipline knowledge and experience, teaching capability and qualifications.
5. To ensure that all academic staff are appropriately qualified for leadership, teaching and learning, and research roles the following criteria should normally be met by applicants:
 - (a) hold knowledge of contemporary developments in the courses to be taught at Zenith for the relevant discipline or field, which is informed by continuing scholarly activity or research or advances in practice;
 - (b) have skills in contemporary teaching, learning and assessment principles relevant to courses at Zenith, the specific role, modes of delivery and the needs of the Institute's student cohorts; and
 - (c) hold a qualification relevant to the courses at Zenith at least one level higher than is awarded for the course of study, or equivalent relevant academic or professional or practice-based experience and expertise.
6. The Institute may recognise equivalent experience in place of a higher education qualification only where this satisfies a particular educational need of the course:
 - (a) that cannot reasonably be addressed in other ways; and
 - (b) where the candidate's experience demonstrates achievements equivalent or superior to the otherwise required qualification.
7. Equivalent experience must be current and directly relevant to the course of study.
 - (a) academic staff candidates who are assessed on a combination of qualifications and professional experience must have at least an academic qualification at the same AQF level as the course of study being taught; and
 - (b) academic staff teaching specialised components of a course who may not fully meet the above requirements will have teaching practice guided and overseen by a staff with meets the required qualifications. The Institute may also consider implementing a specific professional development plan or mentoring or coaching program to assist staff in successfully transitioning to academic teaching at the desired level.

Procedure

Assessing equivalence

8. An assessment of equivalence must be made and authorised prior to an appointment when:
 - (a) a potential academic staff member has valuable appropriate expertise, such as a high level of relevant industry experience and expertise in the course to be taught, but
 - (b) does not meet the minimum qualification requirements as outlined in this Policy and Procedure.
9. In these circumstances the Chair of the recruitment panel is responsible for submitting an assessment of professional equivalence. The assessment is submitted to the Academic Dean with relevant evidence to accompany the recommendation to appoint.
10. The Academic Dean must authorise the assessment of professional equivalence and approve any required supervision or professional development arrangements for the employee.
11. Delegations in relation to the appointment of academic staff are as follows:
 - (a) where an appointee meets the minimum qualifications under this Policy, the appointment of academic teaching staff (Permanent Lecturers, Lecturer B part-time, Sessional Lecturers) is delegated to the Academic Dean, subject to CEO confirmation of budget; and
 - (b) where qualification equivalence is required under this Policy, the appointment of academic teaching staff (Permanent Lecturers, Lecturer B part-time, Sessional Lecturers) is delegated to the Academic Dean, subject to endorsement by the Academic Board (AB) Chair prior to offer and CEO confirmation of budget.

Evidence of equivalence

12. The Institute requires documentary evidence of the satisfaction of these requirements. The experience being assessed must include evidence of recent experience within the last five years.
13. Equivalent experience can be demonstrated by:
 - (a) leadership in the development of professional standards, e.g. Australian Computer Society;
 - (b) performing in a role that requires high order judgement and the provision of expert advice, or roles at a senior level;
 - (c) managing significant projects in a relevant field of the course to be taught;
 - (d) testimonials, awards or other recognition that acknowledges leadership or expertise in the area of the course to be taught or a related discipline e.g. sustainability in the IT industry;
 - (e) professional accreditation relevant to the course to be taught or internationally recognised equivalent professional accreditation body;
 - (f) contributions in the field of education through participation in advisory boards and professional networks;
 - (g) peer reviewed publications in the relevant field of education;
 - (h) other publications such as books and reports; and
 - (i) leadership or management of research acknowledged by peers.

Monitoring

14. The Institute collects data on the recruitment of academic staff, including by type of employment (e.g. casual staff). Student feedback on the Institute's academic staff is sought at the end of each study period.
15. The Institute uses the collected data to monitor trends and emerging issues.
16. The Institute will improve its academic workforce profile and assessment and recruitment processes based on the collected data.
17. The Academic Board and Governing Board (GB) receive an annual report of appointments of staff under this Policy.
18. The Academic Dean also prepares an annual self-assurance report on matters arising under this Policy, including outcomes data, identified risks, and improvement actions. This report is presented to the Academic Board, and a de-identified summary is provided to the Governing Board to support its oversight of the Institute's staffing quality and compliance posture.

Records

19. Appropriate records must be kept for all staff for whom an assessment of professional equivalence has been conducted. This includes authorisations of equivalence assessments and any accompanying evidence, together with information about any professional development or mentoring arrangements that have been put in place.

Appeals

20. Any potential or existing staff member who wishes to appeal any decision made under this Policy and Procedure may do so under the Appeal provisions in the *Human Resources Management Policy and Procedure*.

Accountabilities

21. The Academic Board is responsible for:
 - (a) approving academic staff position descriptions; and
 - (b) overseeing the establishment of an adequate academic workforce profile.
 - (c) endorsing, through the AB Chair, appointments of academic teaching staff where qualification equivalence is required, in accordance with the Delegations Policy and Schedule.
22. The Academic Dean is responsible for:
 - (a) authorising assessments of equivalent experience and ensuring consistency over time; and
 - (b) approving any required supervision or professional development arrangements.
 - (c) appointing academic teaching staff (Permanent Lecturers, Lecturer B part-time, Sessional Lecturers) where the appointee meets minimum qualifications under this Policy, subject to CEO confirmation of budget; and

- (d) appointing academic teaching staff where qualification equivalence is required under this Policy, subject to prior endorsement by the AB Chair and CEO confirmation of budget, in accordance with the Delegations Policy and Schedule.
- 23. The Chair of the recruitment panel is responsible for ensuring that all appropriate procedures have been observed in the recruitment of academic staff and that all appropriate records are kept.
- 24. Course Coordinators are responsible for:
 - (a) advising on the adequacy of professional equivalence in respect of a particular field of education, course, or subject;
 - (b) incorporating the outcomes of assessment of professional equivalence into academic staff professional development plans; and
 - (c) reporting to the Academic Dean on compliance with this Policy for all academic staff they supervise.

Definitions

- 25. There are no specific definitions for this Policy and Procedure.

Version control

Version	Changes	Approval Body	Approval Date
1.0	Original Version	Academic Board	
1.1	Added appendix specifying timelines for professional development Point 12 d) updated fields to IT/Management. Point 12 c) updated specific fields to “sustainability” Point 16 update to “The Academic Board and Governing Board (GB) receive an annual report of appointments of staff under this Policy”	Academic Board	12 Jul 2024
1.2	Renamed Title from “Staff Qualifications and Equivalent professional Development Policy and Procedure” to “Staff Qualifications and Equivalence Policy and Procedure” In Related Documents added “Position Description – Lecturer Position Description – Academic Dean Position Description – Student Learning Support Officer” In HESF added “Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)		



Version	Changes	Approval Body	Approval Date
	Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011 (TEQSA Act) Point 5 a) deleted “e.g. IT / Management and related technologies or a relevant”		
1.3	Added explicit delegation statements for appointment of academic staff in Procedure (Assessing equivalence) and Accountabilities sections, consistent with the Delegations Policy and Schedule: Academic Dean is authorised to appoint academic teaching staff where minimum qualifications are met (subject to CEO budget confirmation); where qualification equivalence is required, appointment requires prior endorsement by the AB Chair (subject to CEO budget confirmation). Added “Delegations Policy and Schedule” under Related Documents	Academic Board	
1.4	Removed standalone “Monitoring and Self-Assurance” section from end of document. Self-assurance reporting obligation merged into the existing Monitoring section as a concluding paragraph, in plain declarative policy voice consistent with the remainder of the document. Inline legislative references removed.	Academic Board	12 Aug 2026

Appendix 1

Professional Development Activity Timeline

Activity/Task	Responsible Person(s)	Due Date	Review Date	Feedback	Notes/Comments
Initial Professional Development Plan Submission	Staff Member				Initial plan detailing development needs and goals.
Development Goals Review	Academic Dean				Review initial submission and provide feedback.
Enrolment in Professional Development Programmes	Staff Member				Enrol in required courses/programmes.
Quarterly Progress Report	Staff Member				Submit a brief report on progress.
Mid-Year Performance Review	Academic Dean, Course Coordinator				Formal review of progress and achievements.
Professional Development Workshop Attendance	Staff Member				Attend at least one workshop or seminar.
Update Professional Development Plan	Staff Member				Adjust plan based on mid-year review.
Annual Professional Development Report	Staff Member				Comprehensive report on all activities and outcomes.
Annual Performance Review	Academic Dean, Course Coordinator				Review and evaluate the annual report and overall performance.
Planning Next Year's Professional Development	Staff Member				Outline goals and activities for the next year.

Guidelines for Professional Development Activities

Minimum Qualifications and Equivalency

- Ensure all staff meet the minimum qualifications or have equivalent professional experience.
- Document and assess equivalency of experience prior to appointment.

Supervision and Mentoring

- Establish appropriate supervision arrangements for staff based on equivalency.
- Implement professional development plans, mentoring, or coaching programmes.

Evidence and Records

- Collect documentary evidence of professional experience and development activities.
- Maintain records of professional development plans, progress reports, and reviews.

Continuous Improvement

- Regularly review and adjust professional development plans based on feedback and performance.
- Use data collected from reviews to improve recruitment and development processes.

Monitoring and Reporting

- Monitor trends and issues in staff development through data analysis.
- Report annually to the Academic Board and Governing Board on staff appointments and development activities.