



IONA COLLEGE
TRINITY

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Equivalence of Academic Staff Qualifications Policy and Procedure

Approved by the Academic Board on 14 December 2021

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1. Purpose

The delivery of higher education courses to students and the ability of students to attain the learning outcomes of their course is partly dependent on the academic staff who deliver the courses.

This Policy and Procedure outlines the framework under which Iona Trinity College of Higher Education (**the College**):

- 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
- Establishes appropriate supervision arrangements for staff who are recruited on the basis of equivalency.

2. Scope

This Policy and Procedure apply to:

- All existing staff, academic and corporate (full-time, part-time, casual or contract), and
- All prospective staff.

3. Policy

3.1 Principle

The College recognises that:

- Both academic and broader credentials of its academic staff are critical in assuring the quality of its courses, and
- Relevant professional skills may complement academic qualifications when determining the suitability of an individual to teach in its courses and support the provision of a career-oriented learning environment.

Academic staff candidates are assessed in relation to their knowledge, teaching capability and qualifications as relevant to the specific course for which they are being considered to teach.

To ensure that all academic staff are appropriately qualified for their roles the following criteria should normally be met by applicants:

- Hold knowledge of contemporary developments in a relevant discipline or field, which is informed by continuing scholarship or research or advances in practice
- Have skills in contemporary teaching, learning and assessment principles relevant to the discipline, role, modes of delivery and the needs of the College's student cohorts, and
- Hold a qualification in a relevant discipline 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.

The College may recognise equivalent experience in place of a higher education qualification only where this satisfies a particular educational need of the course that cannot reasonably be addressed in other ways. This may only occur where the candidate's experience demonstrates achievements equivalent or superior to the otherwise required qualification.

Equivalent experience must be current and directly relevant to the course of study.

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.

Academic staff teaching specialised components of a course who may not fully meet the above requirements will have their teaching guided and overseen by staff who meet the requirements. The College 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.

4. Procedure

4.1 Assessing Equivalence

When recruiting academic staff, where a potential academic staff member is deemed to have valuable appropriate expertise but does not meet the minimum qualification requirements as outlined in this Policy and Procedure, then an assessment of equivalence must be made and authorised prior to appointment.

In these circumstances the Chair of the recruitment panel is responsible for submitting an assessment of professional equivalence. The assessment is submitted to the Principal with relevant evidence to accompany the recommendation to appoint.

The Principal must authorise the assessment of professional equivalence and approve any required supervision or professional development arrangements for the employee.

4.2 Evidence of Equivalence

The College requires documentary evidence of the satisfaction of these requirements. The experience being assessed must include evidence within the last five years.

Equivalent experience can be demonstrated by:

- 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 a relevant field of education
- Testimonials, awards or other recognition that acknowledges leadership or expertise in a relevant 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 and
- Leadership or management of research acknowledged by peers.

5. Monitoring

The College collects data on the recruitment of academic staff, including by type of employment (e.g. casual staff). Student feedback on the College's academic staff is sought at the end of each study period.

The College uses the collected data to monitor trends and emerging issues.

The College will improve its academic workforce profile and assessment and recruitment processes based on the collected data.

The Academic Board and Board of Directors receive an annual report of appointments of staff under this Policy.

6. Records

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.

7. Appeals

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*.

8. Responsibilities

The Academic Board is responsible for:

- Approving academic staff position descriptions, and
- Overseeing the establishment of an adequate academic workforce profile.

The Principal is responsible for:

- Authorising assessments of equivalent experience and ensuring consistency over time, and
- Approving any required supervision or professional development arrangements.

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.

Course Coordinators are responsible for:

- Advising on the adequacy of professional equivalence in respect of a particular field of education, course, or unit
- Incorporating the outcomes of assessment of professional equivalence into academic staff professional development plans, and
- Reporting to the Principal on compliance with this Policy for all academic staff they supervise.

9. Definitions

There are no definitions in this Policy and Procedure.

10. Version History

Version #	Changes	Approval Body	Approval Date
1.0	Original Version	Academic Board	14/12/21

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