KAPLAN

Academic Qualifications and Experience Policy

Scope

This policy applies to all academic staff who are employed or contracted to teach or assess AQF Award and Non-Award Programs at Kaplan Higher Education Pty Ltd, pathway colleges (College).

Purpose

This policy outlines the standards and criteria for assessing the academic and professional experience of academic staff and ensures academic staff undertaking teaching and academic supervisory roles are appropriately qualified in the field/discipline in which they teach or assess.

This Policy is guided by the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021, the Education Services for Overseas Students (Foundation Program Standards) 2021 Instrument, the English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students (ELICOS) Standards 2018 and the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) Guidance Notes.

It is intended to complement and support Kaplan's overarching staff recruitment, training and induction policies and processes.

Definitions

AQF	means the Australian Qualifications Framework which outlines the criteria required to demonstrate the achievement of a Qualification For example, Level 5 = diploma, Level 7 = bachelor's degree, Level 9 = master's degree.
Award Program	means Programs that are AQF Qualifications, specifically diplomas, associate degrees, bachelor's degrees, graduate certificates, graduate diplomas or master's degrees.
Non-Award Program	means Programs that are non-AQF Qualifications at the College. Examples of Non-Award Programs include ELICOS Programs, Foundation Studies Programs, Degree Transfer Programs, Murdoch University Preparation Course (MUPC) and Pre-Master's Programs.
Program	means a structured combination of Subjects required to achieve defined learning outcomes. Depending on the provider, a Program may also be referred to as a *course*.
Qualification	means a certification or formal recognition of learning achieved through the successful completion of both Award and Non-Award Programs.
Subject	means a separate Subject of study that combined with other Subjects, makes up a Program of study. Depending on the provider, a subject may also be referred to as a *unit* or *course*.

Policy Principles and Standards

The College requires that academic staff who are employed or contracted to teach or undertake teaching and learning supervisory roles and/or the implementation and evaluation of professional development activities are appropriately qualified in the field/discipline in which they are engaged.

1. To comply with the Threshold Standards, all relevant College academic staff must have either:

   - a qualification in a relevant field or discipline at least one AQF level higher than the subject being taught, OR
   - a qualification in a relevant field or discipline at the same AQF level as the subject being taught (equivalent academic experience), together with equivalent professional or practice-based experience and expertise.

2. To comply with the Foundation Program Standards all relevant College academic staff must have:

   - a qualification in a relevant field or discipline, and

   EITHER

   - a Bachelor of Education, Diploma of Education, Diploma of Education Studies or a 2 year Teaching Certificate OR
   - at least two years of senior secondary, vocational education and training college, or higher education teaching experience, including experience in teaching students from non-English speaking backgrounds.

   In addition to the above criteria, academic staff teaching one or more academic English language Subjects must also have:

      - a suitable Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) qualification or qualification that contains TESOL as a method, and
      - at least 2 years ESL/EFL teaching experience

3. To comply with the ELICOS Standards 2018 all relevant College teaching and academic staff must have the following:

   - a degree or diploma of at least three years full-time or equivalent (teaching or other),
   - a suitable Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) qualification or qualification that contains TESOL as a method,
   - appropriate TESOL teaching experience, or their teaching be performed under the supervision of a fully qualified senior member.

   In addition to the above criteria, all relevant College senior ELICOS leadership staff must have:

      - a degree,
      - a suitable postgraduate TESOL qualification(s), and
      - appropriate educational management and TESOL teaching experience or equivalent.

4. For academic staff assessed based on the Threshold Standards criteria of equivalent academic, professional or practice-based experience, staff must have acquired sufficient professional experience working in the relevant field or industry. At the College this is considered:

   - equivalent professional experience that demonstrates achievement of specific knowledge and skills relevant to the role; and
   - a minimum of five years current, relevant and appropriate industry experience.

5. The College recognises that some discipline areas require a combination of registration, industry or professional experience and qualifications to achieve expert-level professional standards based on the Threshold Standards. In such cases, the relevant professional and industry experience would be used to assess the equivalence of being one AQF level above the subject being taught.

6. All academic staff are to be fully informed of the requirements for delivering relevant College Award and Non-Award Courses / Units and Programs / Courses and have approval for delivering them in accordance with this policy before undertaking any of those activities.

The following table outlines the minimum qualifications and/or professional equivalence criteria for academic staff teaching and assessing College Award and Non-Award Subjects, including ELICOS and Foundation Program offerings.

These criteria are to be read in conjunction with the requirements outlined in sections 1- 6 above. Academic staff must also maintain currency in both their disciplinary expertise and teaching practice through ongoing professional development.

Table 1: Teaching Staff Eligibility Matrix: Minimum AQF Qualifications and Professional Experience by Program

AQF Qualification and/or Subject Level	Minimum staff AQF Qualification Level	Academic and Professional Experience Equivalence Criteria
ELICOS	***Teachers*** Bachelor's Degree or Diploma, and A suitable TESOL qualification ***Senior Academic Leader*** Bachelor's Degree, and Postgraduate TESOL	Nil
Foundation Program	***Teachers*** Bachelor's Degree in relevant subject area(s) **and** **Either**: A Bachelor of Education, Diploma of Education, Diploma of Education Studies or a 2 year Teaching Certificate **OR** At least two years of senior secondary, vocational education and training college, or higher education teaching experience, including experience in teaching students from non-English speaking backgrounds. ***Academic English Language Teachers*** Bachelor's Degree and an English language teaching qualification*, **and** at least 2 years ESL/EFL teaching experience **These include: a Graduate Certificate in Teaching English as a Second Language; a Graduate Diploma in Teaching English as a Second Language; a Graduate Diploma in Applied Linguistics; a Diploma of Education (English); or a recognised Teaching English as a Second Language program. (Qualifications may be from Australia or overseas. Overseas teacher qualifications must be equivalent to those of Australian qualifications).*	Nil

AQF Qualification and/or Subject Level	Minimum staff AQF Qualification Level	Academic and Professional Experience Equivalence Criteria
AQF Level 5: Diploma*	**AQF Level 6:** Associate Degree	**AQF Level 5: Diploma** **With either:** • 5 years minimum 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, **OR** • Enrolment in a relevant AQF Level 6 qualification plus relevant professional experience, together totaling 3 years.
AQF Level 6: Advanced Diploma / Associate Degree* *Note: This includes the bridging semester of the Degree Transfer Extended Program and the Murdoch University Preparation Course (MUPC).*	**AQF Level 7:** Bachelor's Degree	**AQF Level 6: Advanced Diploma / Associate Degree** **With either:** • 5 years minimum 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, **OR** • Enrolment in a relevant AQF Level 7 qualification plus relevant professional experience, together totaling 3 years.
AQF Level 7: Bachelor's Degree *Note: This includes the Degree Transfer Standard Program.*	**AQF Level 8:** • Bachelor (Honours) • Graduate Certificate • Graduate Diploma	**AQF Level 7: Bachelor's Degree** **With either:** • 5 years minimum 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, **OR** • Enrolment in a relevant AQF Level 8 qualification plus relevant professional experience, together totaling 3 years.
Postgraduate Qualifying Program	**Level 8** • Bachelor (Honours) • Graduate Certificate • Graduate Diploma	**AQF Level 7: Bachelor's Degree** **With either:** • 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, **OR** • Enrolment in a relevant AQF Level 8 program, plus relevant professional experience, together totaling 3 years.

AQF Qualification and/or Subject Level	Minimum staff AQF Qualification Level	Academic and Professional Experience Equivalence Criteria
AQF Level 8: • Bachelor (Honours) • Graduate Certificate • Graduate Diploma *Note: This includes the bridging component of the Pre-Master's Program.*	**AQF Level 9:** Masters by Research or Coursework	**AQF Level 8:** • **Bachelor (Honours), or** • **Graduate Certificate, or** • **Graduate Diploma** With either: • 5 years minimum 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, or • Enrolment in a relevant AQF Level 9 qualification plus relevant professional experience, together totaling 3 years.
AQF Level 9: Master's Degree (Coursework) *Note: This includes the Pre-Master's Program Accelerated and credit-bearing component of the Pre-Master's Program.*	**AQF Level 10:** Doctorate	**AQF Level 9: Masters by Research or Coursework** With either: • 5 years minimum 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, or • Enrolment in a relevant AQF Level 10 qualification plus relevant professional experience, together totalling 3 years.

*Only when taught as a stand-alone qualification

Recognition of Professional Designations

The College recognises some existing professional designations when assessing academic staff against the professional experience equivalence criteria outlined in the table above. These designations include:

a) Current registration as a Certified Financial Analyst (CFA).

b) Current registration as a Certified Financial Planner (CFP).

c) Current registration as a Fellow Chartered Financial Planner (FChFP).

d) Current registration as a Certified Practicing Accountant (CPA).

e) Current registration as a Chartered Accountant (CA).

f) Current registration as a Fellow of the Australian Human Resources Institute (FAHRI).

g) Current registration as a Fellow of the Australian Marketing Institute (FAMI CPM).

h) Current registration as a Fellow of the Council for Australasian Tourism and Hospitality Education (CAUTHE).

i) Current registration as a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Project Management (FAIPM).

j) Current registration as a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Management (FAIM).

k) Current registration as a Chartered Manager with the Institute of Managers and Leaders (CMgr MIML).

l) Current registration as a Certified Technologist (CT) or Certified Professional (CP) with the Australian Computer Society.

m) Current registration as a medical practitioner, or equivalent, in Australia.

The College may also accept the international equivalents of these professional registrations or designations.

Exceptions

Any academic staff member who does not meet the requirements of this policy must submit a case for approval to deliver a specific award subject to the Assistant Director, Teaching and Learning, who will seek endorsement from the Director, Teaching and Learning. Following endorsement by the Director, Teaching and Learning, final approval must be granted by the Academic Board before the academic staff member can commence any teaching activities. These teaching activities can only be performed under the supervision of a fully qualified senior member of the academic management team and under no circumstances can supervised members of staff serve as subject coordinators.

Scholarship: Academic Staff Teaching and Assessing Award Subjects

The College recognises that engagement in scholarly activities is a significant and essential element of academic staff development. The College is therefore committed to fostering a culture of scholarship by supporting all academic staff to regularly undertake those activities. All academic staff are required to annually declare to the College the nature of their scholarly activities throughout the previous year, and to provide further details or evidence to confirm these activities at the College's request. All scholarly activities are to be recorded and maintained on a centralised register.

The College's culture of scholarship is guided by the following models, systems and practices:

The typology of scholarship, as conceptualised by Professor Ernest L. Boyer[1], is adopted at the College as a means of classifying the various types of scholarly activities that academic staff can undertake:

- *The scholarship of discovery:* This is "what is meant when academics speak of research". At the College, for example, academic staff in the process of completing an AQF Level 10 qualification are assigned a remunerated load to support their research.

- *The scholarship of integration:* This is the practice of assigning "meaning to isolated facts, putting them in perspective … making connections across the disciplines, placing the specialties in larger context, illuminating data in a revealing way, often educating non-specialists … work that seeks to interpret, draw together, and bring new insight to bear". At the College, for example, numerous interdisciplinary staff-led professional development sessions are hosted every month that enable academic staff to teach each other about the latest advancements in their field.

- *The scholarship of application:* This is the way in which "knowledge [can] be responsibly applied to consequential problems … how it can be helpful to individuals as well as institutions … In activities such as these, theory and practice vitally interact". At the College, for example, working groups of academic staff are formed with the objective of developing and implementing solutions and innovations such as the EdTech Group which is tasked with piloting and evaluating educational technologies. They are then responsible for coaching their fellow faculty members on how to effectively incorporate these technologies in their teaching.

- *The scholarship of teaching:* This emerges when acquired knowledge is conveyed in such a manner it "both educates and entices future scholars". At the College, for example, academic staff are encouraged and supported to write research papers, conceptual articles and literature reviews in various publications such as the Kaplan-funded peer-reviewed Journal of Applied Learning and Teaching (JALT), whose editorial board comprises senior academics from approximately two dozen higher education institutions across the world.

Academic staff must complete a minimum of two scholarly activities annually: one that pertains to the disciplinary field in which they teach and another on the practice of teaching and learning.

The completion of the scholarly activities must be accompanied by further detail and evidence in relation to two specific factors:

- The **demonstrable outcomes** that ensued as a result of that scholarly activity, such as an increase in subject knowledge, the strengthening of teaching skills, improvements to curriculum and the launch of an innovation.

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[1] Boyer, EL 1990, *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate,* Princeton University Press, Lawrenceville, pp. 17-25.

- The **dissemination of that knowledge** to wider scholarly or professional communities so that others can learn from the academic staff member's experience.

This approach ensures the scholarly activity can indeed be regarded as scholarship since it will not be sufficient for an academic staff member, for example, to simply attend a conference, participate in a governance committee or serve on the board of a professional association unless the academic staff member can articulate relevance via the demonstrable outcomes that ensued and the way in which these learnings were shared with a wider audience.

The scholarly activities, demonstrable outcomes and dissemination of learnings will be recorded on a centralised register which will be analysed and submitted via a summary report to the December meeting of the Academic Board every year. The report will illustrate the proportion of academic staff who have met both forms of scholarship in the preceding 12 months as well as the names of those who remain non-compliant and as such will be placed on a documented performance improvement plan. Failure to meet these standards of scholarship may culminate in the cessation of the academic staff member's employment relationship with the College.

To further support academic staff, the College will make available a comprehensive schedule of complimentary scholarship events that can be accessed synchronously or asynchronously. Academic staff must have engaged with at least one of these College-funded opportunities for CPD every year. This usage will be reported annually to the Academic Board.

While not exhaustive, the following table outlines the College's scholarship expectations and examples of scholarship activities:

Scholarship expectation	Examples of scholarship activities
Demonstration of current disciplinary knowledge and evidence of ongoing intellectual engagement.	- Submission of extracts to, and delivery of presentations at, conferences. - Participation in networks, communities of practice and formal mentoring activities. - Active engagement in ongoing academic study, particularly at a higher AQF level. - Completion of CPD which forms part of professional designation requirements.
Service to the profession.	- Engagement as a member and/or leader of relevant professional organisations. - Leadership in the development of professional standards. - Formal documented mentoring of new entrants to the relevant profession. - Ongoing maintenance and upgrading (where appropriate) of professional qualifications.
Maintenance and development of discipline-specific expertise.	- Publication of articles related to research within the discipline or profession. - Engagement with current research through Kaplan databases, libraries and information resources. - Active participation in and reporting on relevant workshops, seminars and conferences. - Active membership of peer working groups.
Engagement with current thinking and practices relevant to the discipline.	- Contributions in the field of study through participation in relevant advisory boards and professional networks. - Active engagement in relevant industry forums, think tanks and regulatory bodies.

Scholarship expectation	Examples of scholarship activities
Ongoing development of teaching and learning practice.	• Participation in external benchmarking projects. • Completion of relevant training and professional development. • Active involvement in the development and review of curriculum. • Leadership of assessment validation and moderation processes. • Facilitation of grade calibration exercises.
Supporting students in their acquisition of learning outcomes and graduate attributes.	• Active participation in assessment workshops and pedagogical forums. • Development and implementation of action items arising from student feedback.

Professional Development: Academic, Teaching and Support Staff for Non-Award Programs

Staff members receive appropriate guidance and support through both the College and staff-initiated professional development sessions within the Professional Development Framework. Those sessions allow staff to strengthen managerial and administrative skills, develop new skills and knowledge, raise work standards, achieve expected work outcomes, and keep abreast of changes in government regulations. The sessions also provide teaching and academic staff with the opportunity to maintain currency within the education industry, enhance their professional skills, and keep up to date with the latest information and developments in the TESOL field. All teaching staff are encouraged to complete a minimum of two professional development sessions annually. All professional development sessions are to be recorded and maintained on a centralised register.

- College-initiated professional development sessions – annually planned and delivered by adequately qualified staff and/or contractors, both internally and externally. They are provided for varying combinations of teaching, academic, and support staff, which include presentations, peer observations, review of teaching content/materials, workshops, participation in assessment validation/moderation sessions, small group activities, online training sessions or courses etc.
- Staff-initiated professional development sessions – proactively identified and engaged by staff for their own professional development needs (e.g., up to date developmental knowledge in TESOL theory and practice), which includes attendance at conferences, workshops, relevant professional memberships, academic qualifications, certified training, webinars, participation in assessment validation/moderation sessions, self-training etc.

Relevant Legislation

As a registered education provider, the College operates under strict laws and regulations. Policies and procedures are in place to ensure compliance with the legislative instruments referenced below:

- Australian Qualifications Framework
- Education Services for Overseas Students Act (ESOS Act)
- Education Services for Overseas Students Regulations 2019
- ELICOS Standards 2018 (Standard 6)
- Higher Education Standards Framework 2021 (Threshold Standards)
- National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018
- TEQSA's Compliance Guide: Scholarship (version 3.0)

Related Policies and Documents

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following:

- Professional Development Framework

Version Control and Accountable Officers

It is the joint responsibility of the Implementation Officer and Responsible Officer to ensure compliance with this policy.

Policy Category	Academic
Responsible Officer	Vice President, Academic
Implementation Officer	Director, Learning and Teaching
Review Date	September 2025
Approved by	
Vice-President, Academic under a standing delegation from the KHE Academic Board	

Version	Authored by	Brief Description of the changes	Date Approved	Effective Date
1.0	Quality, Regulations and Standards team	Policy re-branded for new KHE college and to include all Kaplan Higher Education pathway colleges. Minor wording and formatting changes.	17.02.2023	17.02.2023
1.1	Quality, Regulations and Standards team	Policy re-branded for new KHE college and to include all Kaplan Higher Education pathway colleges. Minor wording and formatting changes.	10.07.2025	11.07.2025