

Higher Education Staff Teaching Qualifications or Equivalence

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November 2024



A key area of higher education delivery is the suitability and quality of the teaching staff. This is best captured in Standard 3.2 of the Threshold Standards – ‘Staffing requires registered higher education providers to ensure that academic staff appointed to teach students are appropriately qualified in the relevant discipline for their level of teaching.’

Clearly essential – relatively straightforward – but often needing tweaking and understanding in the ‘equivalence’ space where providers are keen for students to have access to staff who have significant expertise and experience – often more important than formal qualifications. This is particularly so in the creative arts space.

The critical areas of concern include –

Appropriate qualifications in relevant discipline

The standard alignment is for staff to have a qualification one Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) level above the qualification they are teaching. This is relatively straightforward with undergraduate degrees – but becomes more challenging when operating postgraduate degrees where the organisation is attempting to balance qualification and expertise.

See – Australian Qualifications Framework - [Home | AQF](#)

Intellectual inquiry in line with course learning outcomes

The course learning outcomes (along with graduate attributes) are key considerations when employing staff. It is an excellent idea to firstly consider the organisation’s outcomes and attributes in preparation for the selection of staff. In the case of existing staff it becomes essential to align their expertise and practice accordingly.

A sample set of learning outcomes –

CL01	A broad knowledge of the applied, theoretical and historical basis of the discipline
CL02	A depth of disciplinary knowledge in a professionally applicable specialisation
CL03	An understanding of the processes of musical scholarship and research
CL04	The ability to work both independently and collaboratively in diverse and complex musical settings
CL05	Effective written, verbal and interpersonal communication skills
CL06	Critical thinking and analytical skills appropriate to a range of contexts including further study
CL07	The ability to apply specific musical skills to a wide range of professional contexts
CL08	The capacity to apply technological and creative solutions to contemporary musical practices
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CL09	The ability to incorporate and apply knowledge from business practice and legislation to a portfolio career in the music profession.

A sample set of graduate attributes –

GA1	Deep disciplinary knowledge
GA2	The ability to apply knowledge and skills in innovative ways
GA3	A commitment to lifelong learning
GA4	Effective communication skills for diverse contexts
GA5	The capacity to work independently and collaboratively
GA6	Demonstrate critical thinking, problem solving and decision-making abilities essential to contributing soundly to the resolution of issues confronting organisations
GA7	Facilitate intellectual curiosity
GA8	Act in an ethical manner in all aspects of professional life.

A clear understanding of what achievements are intended will no doubt provide valuable illumination on who needs to be employed – and what set of skills and expertise is needed to achieve these goals. This is not the case in some many organisations – and needs to be prioritised.

See - [Key Course Information | Guild Music Copy](#)

Knowledge of contemporary development in the field

Ideally staff are up to date with developments in their discipline field. Remaining current is vital and requires ongoing commitment to both scholarship and professional development.

To stay informed - *scholarship can take on many forms including –*

- Publishing in peer reviewed forums
- Blogs
- Internal papers, articles and chapters articles
- Media presentations
- Producing creative works
- Recording
- Performing creative work
- Public performances
- Compositions
- Newsletters
- Attendance at Professional development days

- Exhibiting
- Creating learning infrastructures
- Literature reviews
- Textbooks or study guides
- Course design and collaboration
- Serving industry or government as external consultants
- Assuming leadership roles in professional organisations
- Advising student leaders
- Technical reports and presentations
- Speeches and keynote addresses
- Research on learning
- Developing testing materials
- Developing new teaching methods
- Mentoring postgraduate students
- Mentoring staff
- Designing and implementing assessment systems
- Accreditation or quality systems documentation

HE providers need to have a good scholarship *policy* in place (preferably benchmarked); a clear *understanding* of what scholarship is and how it relates directly to the teaching and learning at the institution (one size does not fit all); a mechanism for *harvesting* staff activity; and a commitment to ongoing *support, updating and communicating* – the more the better.

See – Scholarship can take on many forms -
[6113ad_2887992fd3a440a4bca4cbcb6414de4f.pdf](#)

Skills in contemporary teaching embracing role/mode/student access

Irrespective of the mode – staff need to be focussed on contemporary teaching style (and this includes the appropriate use of technology) and place the emphasis on student access and student support – specifically academic.

See Student Support – Academic and Non-academic -
[6113ad_526404439d84444ab36a3757d9d9bcaa.pdf](#)

Choosing the right people for the job is a key consideration in the first instance. Ensuring staff maintain their currency and understanding of contemporary developments is equally as important.

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