

AC-A1 ACADEMIC ACCREDITATION POLICY AND PROCEDURE

1 PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to outline the standards and framework by which academic staff are approved to teach units at BBI–The Australian Institute of Theological Education (BBI-TAITE).

2 BACKGROUND

BBI-TAITE is committed to quality learning and teaching, as reflected in its educational mission. This policy is intended to ensure that academic staff are classified based on their qualifications, knowledge, skills, and experience to provide the most appropriately qualified academic staff for teaching the Institute's units.

The *Higher Education Standards Framework Section 3.2 Staffing* requires that:

1. The staffing complement for each course of study is sufficient to meet the educational, academic support and administrative needs of student cohorts undertaking the course.
2. The academic staffing profile for each course of study provides the level and extent of academic oversight and teaching capacity needed to lead students in intellectual inquiry suited to the nature and level of expected learning outcomes.
3. Staff with responsibilities for academic oversight and those with teaching and supervisory roles in courses or units of study are equipped for their roles, including having:
 - a. knowledge of contemporary developments in the discipline or field, which is informed by continuing scholarship or research or advances in practice
 - b. skills in contemporary teaching, learning and assessment principles relevant to the discipline, their role, modes of delivery and the needs of particular student cohorts, and
 - c. 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, except for staff supervising doctoral degrees having a doctoral degree or equivalent research experience.
4. Teachers who teach specialised components of a course of study, such as experienced practitioners and teachers undergoing training, who may not fully meet the standard for knowledge, skills and qualification or experience required for teaching or supervision (3.2.3) have their teaching guided and overseen by staff who meet the standard.
5. Teaching staff are accessible to students seeking individual assistance with their studies, at a level consistent with the learning needs of the student cohort.¹

¹ Higher Education Standards Framework. *Section 3.2 Staffing*. Available online at: https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2015L01639/Html/Text#_Toc428368860. Accessed 13/04/2020.

3 SCOPE

This policy applies to all academic staff of BBI-TAITE.

4 DEFINITIONS

Academic Accreditation – refers to the discipline, sub-disciplines, and units in which an academic staff member is approved to teach.

Academic Staff – refers to all full-time, part-time, and sessional faculty members employed by the Institute, including unit authors, online unit moderators, lecturers and tutors.

5 POLICY

5.1 Qualification level: The Institute requires that all academic staff approved to teach a unit at BBI-TAITE hold a qualification at least one AQF level above the course of study in which the unit is delivered. For example, to teach an AQF level 8 graduate certificate unit would require the lecturer to hold at least an AQF level 9 qualification in the field in which they will be teaching.

In normal circumstances, academic staff will be approved to teach specific units, for example, a Biblical Studies unit, if their qualifications, skills, knowledge and professional and research experience focuses in the Biblical Studies discipline.

5.2 Sessional staff: Sessional staff will only be approved to teach specific units.

5.3 Cross-discipline teaching: In some cases, academic staff may be approved to teach across two or more disciplines where their qualifications, skills, knowledge, and professional and research experience demonstrate this.

5.4 Teaching at a higher AQF level: Academic staff may not teach at an AQF level above their highest AQF qualification. Applications for exemptions to this requirement will not be approved.

5.5 Exceptions: Exceptions to 5.1 above may occur where the applicant:

5.5.1 demonstrates professional, teaching, and research experience to warrant teaching at the same level as their highest AQF qualification, and meets at least TWO of the following criteria:

5.5.1.1 Leadership: five or more years' experience at a senior leadership level in a relevant professional context;

5.5.1.2 Publications: five or more peer-reviewed publications in the area of accreditation over the past 10 years;

5.5.1.3 Teaching experience: two or more years' experience teaching at the relevant AQF level at another Higher Education provider, together with a letter of endorsement from a senior academic at that provider.

5.5.2 holds a doctoral qualification (Level 10) and is teaching at that level.

6 PROCEDURE

BBI-TAITE maintains an *Academic Accreditation Register* (the Register) listing the academic staff and the units they are approved to teach. The Register is maintained by the Associate Dean (Academic) (or delegate). The procedure for approval to be included in the Register is as follows:

6.1 Application procedure: Academic staff may apply to the Associate Dean (Academic) for admission to the Register. Typically, applicants will be approved to teach in one discipline area, for example:

- Theology;
- Religious Education;
- Leadership and Theology; or
- Governance and Canon Law.

6.2 Approval to teach at the same level: Applications for approval to teach a unit at the same level at which the academic staff member holds their highest AQF qualification will be submitted to the Associate Dean (Academic) for the approval of the Academic Board.

6.3 Admission to the Register: To be admitted to the Register, academic staff members make application to the Associate Dean (Academic), outlining their case for approval to teach in a specific discipline area and a nominated unit(s).

The application must include:

- a letter outlining the applicant's case;
- a copy of their current CV including a summary of their qualifications, publishing and research activity, teaching experience and industry and professional experience;
- a copy of transcripts and testamurs for all academic awards received; and
- any other supporting documentation

6.4 Academic Board Standing Committee Approval:

6.4.1 The Associate Dean (Academic) reviews the application for admission to the Register and recommends to the Academic Board Standing Committee the approval or not of the application, based on the following criteria:

- the applicant holds a qualification in the specific discipline at least one AQF level higher than the degree in which they will be teaching;
- the applicant's qualifications warrant approval to teach in the selected discipline and the nominated units;
- the applicant holds an AQF qualification
 - at the same level as the nominated teaching area; and
 - demonstrates professional, teaching, and research experience, to meet that level; and
 - meet two of the criteria listed under 5.5 above.

6.4.2 The Associate Dean (Academic) forwards the recommendation to the Academic Board Standing Committee, who approves or declines the application.

6.4.3 The applicant will be informed of the outcome of their application within eight weeks of applying for admission to the Register.

6.4.4 If the application is declined or if the applicant is dissatisfied with the outcome, the applicant may discuss the decision with the Associate Dean (Academic). Following the discussion, the Associate Dean (Academic) may invite the applicant to re-apply.

6.4.5 The Associate Dean (Academic) files a copy of the application and the outcome securely, and then updates the Register.

6.4.6 Updates to the Register are reported to the Academic Board, along with relevant applications, quarterly.

7 RELAXING PROVISION

To provide for exceptional circumstances, the Associate Dean (Academic) may relax any provision of this procedure and report these decisions to the next meeting of the Academic Board.

8 KEY RELATED DOCUMENTS

- *AC-A3 Academic Board Membership and Terms of Reference*
- *R2 Records Management Policy*

9 NOTES

Contact Officer	Associate Dean (Academic)
Implementation Officer/s	Associate Dean (Academic)
Approval Authority / Authorities	Associate Dean (Academic) / Academic Board
Date Approved	18/11/15
Date of Commencement	1/7/16
Date for Review	24 MONTHS AFTER COMMENCEMENT
Amendment History	<p>Reviewed: 3 December 2018</p> <p>Reviewed 17 April 2020: HESF Standards added to set the background for the requirements concerning academic staff teaching units at particular levels, reinforcing the N + 1 rule, addition of Academic Board Standing Committee approval, and addition of Clause 7 Relaxing Provision.</p> <p>1/7/2021 Change of code of policy from A1 to AC-A1 to reflect that is an Academic Policy; and delete references to Academic Dean and replace with Associate Dean (Academic).</p>
Key Stakeholders	Full-time and Fractional Academic Staff and Sessional Academics