

## ACADEMIC EQUIVALENCE POLICY

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**Purpose** The purpose of this policy is to describe the College’s philosophy and approach to assessing the equivalence of professional experience with academic qualifications for the purposes of academic appointment at the College of Law.

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**Applicability** The policy applies to all part-time, full-time and casual academic employees of The College of Law Limited (College).

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**Introduction** The Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) Provider Course Accreditation Standards (at 4.2) state that lecturers must be “appropriately qualified in the relevant discipline for their level of teaching (qualified to at least one Qualification Standards level higher than the course of study being taught *or with equivalent professional experience*” [emphasis added]. Accordingly, lecturers in the College PLT Program, teaching a level 8 award, ought to have a Masters degree or equivalent, and lecturers in the Applied Law Programs, teaching a level 9 award ought to have a Doctoral degree or equivalent.

This policy sets out the criteria by which the College will assess professional experience as an equivalent of the Qualification Standards.

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**Equivalence Principles (AQF Level 9)**

*Equivalence to a Masters degree (AQF Level 9)*

In order to be eligible for appointment as a lecturer in the PLT Program, the following are essential criteria:

- A legal qualification
- At least 5 years relevant post-admission experience meeting the professional experience descriptors in **Table 1** below.

There are other essential and desirable criteria, but these are the critical criteria for equivalence purposes.

The minimum five years relevant post-admission experience

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represents the College’s judgment that, in that time, the prospective lecturer has acquired enough of the technical knowledge, skills, professional values and high level cognitive abilities to impart and assess (with training in the College’s pedagogical method) the learning outcomes of the PLT Program.

Any lawyer who has been in practice for at least five years will have acquired a body of knowledge that includes the understanding of recent developments in a field of knowledge and/or area of professional practice. Indeed, the College encourages lecturers to maintain a professional practice in order to keep such knowledge refreshed.

**Table 1** maps the Level 9 AQF descriptors against the knowledge, skills and experience a lawyer is likely to have acquired after 5 years in practice. There are a vast range of experiential types, so the table can only refer to what might approximate to a median industry experience type.

**Equivalence  
Principles (AQF  
Level 10)**

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*Equivalence to a Doctoral Degree (AQF Level 10)*

In order to be eligible for appointment as a lecturer in the Applied Law Programs, the following are essential criteria:

- A legal qualification
- At least 8 years relevant post-admission experience, at least 3 years of which has been at an advanced level meeting the professional experience descriptors in **Table 2** below.

The professional experience descriptors in **Table 2** will be applied to ensure that any person appointed as a lecturer in the Applied Law Programs:

- has made an outstanding and sustained contribution in legal practice
- has demonstrated a mature capacity for intellectual strategy in the context of legal practice.

The following are examples of professional credentials that may be taken into account as indicators of professional experience at the

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required level:

- appointment to judicial office
- appointment as senior counsel
- substantial experience at the bar
- specialist accreditation
- partnership in a law firm of at least 12 partners
- partnership in a specialist or 'boutique' law firm
- membership of a professional or government committee or body that has a direct influence on the conduct or development of legal practice
- publications in relevant areas of law or education
- a record of presentations at conferences or seminars in a discrete area of legal practice at an advanced level
- substantial industry recognition as an expert practitioner.

**Appointment**

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See the Academic Equivalence Procedure.

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**Table 1**

<b>Comparative Table</b> <b>AQF Descriptors v Professional Experience</b>		
<b>Levels</b>	<b>Masters Degree</b>	<b>Relevant Professional Experience</b>
<b>Purpose</b>  This qualification is designed...	To qualify individuals who apply an advanced body of knowledge in a range of contexts for professional practice or scholarship and/or as a pathway for further learning	Application of an advanced body of knowledge in a range of contexts for professional practice demonstrated by at least 5 years' experience in practice as a lawyer applying legal knowledge to solve client problems

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<p><b>Knowledge</b></p> <p>Graduates of the qualification will have...</p>	<p>A body of knowledge that includes the understanding of recent developments in a field of knowledge and/or area of professional practice</p>	<p>A body of knowledge that includes the understanding of recent developments in legal practice generally, and specifically in one or more of the practice areas of litigation, property or commercial and corporate practice</p>
<p><b>Skills</b></p> <p>Graduates of the qualification will have...</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cognitive skills to demonstrate mastery of theoretical knowledge and to critically reflect on theory and professional practice</li> <li>• Cognitive, technical and creative skills to critically investigate, analyse and interpret complex information, problems, concepts and theories and to apply established theories to different bodies of knowledge or practice</li> <li>• Cognitive, technical and creative skills to generate and evaluate complex ideas and concepts at an abstract level</li> <li>• Communication and technical research skills to justify theoretical propositions, methodologies, conclusions and professional decisions to specialist and non-specialist audiences</li> <li>• Technical and communication skills to design, evaluate, implement, analyse and theorise about developments that contribute to professional practice or scholarship</li> </ul>	<p>Cognitive, technical, research, creative and communication skills demonstrated by at least 5 years' experience in practice as a lawyer –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• researching, analysing and interpreting the theory and practice of the law</li> <li>• researching, analysing and interpreting the factual and relational matrix of client problems</li> <li>• applying legal concepts and knowledge to develop and implement solutions appropriate to the client</li> <li>• communicating propositions, methodologies, conclusions and decisions to clients, other lawyers and third parties</li> <li>• maintaining a practising certificate and complying with continuing professional education requirements.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Application of Knowledge and Skills</b></p> <p>Graduates will be able</p>	<p>Apply knowledge and skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To demonstrate creativity and</li> </ul>	<p>Application of legal knowledge and skills demonstrated by at least 5 years' experience in practice as a lawyer –</p>

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to...	<p>initiative in the application of knowledge and skills to new situations in professional practice and/or for further learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To demonstrate high level personal autonomy and accountability</li> <li>To demonstrate the planning and execution of a substantial research-based project, capstone experience or piece of scholarship</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>taking initiative and showing creativity in solving new client problems as they arise</li> <li>demonstrating high level personal autonomy and accountability to clients, employer, the courts and regulators of the legal profession</li> <li>constituting a capstone experience of being a professional lawyer.</li> </ul>
<b>Notional Duration of Student Learning</b>	1 – 2 years: 1 year following a 4 year level 7 or 8 qualification; 2 years year following a 3 year level 7 or 8 qualification. Duration may be also up to 4 years following a level 7 or 8 qualification to prepare graduates for entry to a regulated profession.	At least 5 years post admission experience in practice as a lawyer.

**Table 2**

<b>Comparative Table</b> <b>AQF Descriptors v Professional Experience</b>		
<b>Levels</b>	<b>Doctoral Degree (Professional)</b>	<b>Relevant Professional Experience</b>
<b>Purpose</b> This qualification is designed...	To qualify individuals who apply a substantial body of knowledge to research, investigate and develop new knowledge in one or more fields of professional practice	Application of a substantial body of legal knowledge to research, investigate and develop creative and innovative solutions to complex client problems in an outstanding and sustained manner

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<p><b>Knowledge</b></p> <p>Graduates of the qualification will have...</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A substantial body of knowledge at the frontier of a field of work or learning, including knowledge that constitutes an original contribution</li> <li>• Substantial knowledge of research principles and methods applicable to the field of work or learning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A substantial body of knowledge at the frontier of a field of legal practice at a level that is outstanding amongst peers</li> <li>• Substantial knowledge of research and investigative principles and methods applicable to professional practice as a lawyer at an advanced level</li> </ul>
<p><b>Skills</b></p> <p>Graduates of the qualification will have...</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cognitive skills to demonstrate expert understanding of theoretical knowledge and to critically reflect on theory and professional practice</li> <li>• Cognitive skills and using intellectual independence, to think critically, evaluate existing knowledge and ideas, undertake systematic investigation and reflection on theory and practice to generate new knowledge</li> <li>• Expert technical and creative skills applicable to the field of work or learning</li> <li>• Communication skills to explain and critique theoretical propositions, methodologies and conclusions</li> <li>• Communication skills to cogently present a complex investigation or original research for external examination against international standards and to communicate results to peers and the community</li> <li>• Expert skills to design, implement, analyse, theorise and communicate developments that make a significant and original</li> </ul>	<p>Outstanding and sustained skills demonstrated by at least 8 years' experience in practice as a lawyer, at least 3 years of which has been at an advanced level including –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• cognitive skills that demonstrate expert understanding of the law and legal practice and critical reflection on the law and legal practice</li> <li>• cognitive skills that use intellectual independence and critical thinking to evaluate existing knowledge and ideas and systematic investigation and reflection to develop creative and innovative solutions to complex client problems</li> <li>• expert technical and creative skills applicable to professional practice as a lawyer at an advanced level</li> <li>• communication skills to explain and critique propositions, methodologies and conclusions in the context of professional practice as a lawyer at an advanced level</li> <li>• communication skills to cogently present a complex advice, or legal argument or</li> </ul>

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	contribution to knowledge, policy or professional practice	determination, in a complex matter to clients, peers, a judicial forum or government authority <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>expert skills to design, implement, analyse, theorise and communicate developments in legal practice and solutions to client problems in a way that makes a significant and creative contribution to legal practice.</li> </ul>
<b>Application of Knowledge and Skills</b>  Graduates will be able to...	Apply knowledge and skills: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To demonstrate initiative and creativity and initiative in new situations and/or for further learning</li> <li>To demonstrate full responsibility and accountability for personal outputs</li> <li>To demonstrate the planning and execution of an original research-based project or piece of scholarship</li> <li>To demonstrate the ongoing capacity to generate new knowledge, policy or practices</li> </ul>	Application of legal knowledge and skills in an outstanding and sustained manner demonstrated by at least 8 years' experience in practice, at least 3 years of which has been at an advanced level – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>taking initiative and showing creativity in solving a variety of new and complex client problems</li> <li>demonstrating full responsibility and accountability for personal outputs, including responsibility and accountability to clients, partners, the courts and regulators of the legal profession</li> <li>demonstrating the planning and execution of creative and innovative solutions to client problems involving highly complex factual and legal scenarios</li> <li>demonstrating the ongoing capacity to generate creative and innovative solutions to complex client problems.</li> </ul>
<b>Notional Duration of Student Learning</b>	3 – 4 years	At least 8 years post admission experience in practice as a lawyer, at least 3 years of which has been at an advanced level.

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**Note:**

If there is a related Procedure that your Policy relates to please insert the name of the procedure within the document as a ["hyperlink"](#).

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