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Approved by	Academic Quality Committee
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Superseded documents	None
Related documents	Faculty Qualification Policy Academic Governance Charter Moderation Portal <i>Terms of Reference – Academic Approvals Committee</i>

1. PURPOSE

To define the rules by which the Academic Approvals Committee, a committee of the Academic Quality Committee (AQC), processes requests for the approval of academic staff to teach with the Australian University of Theology (AUT). Originally the Committee as a panel established at the February 2016 meeting of the AQC and was authorized to approve requests for new academic staff and changes for existing staff regarding the level and area in which they are approved. The panel became a committee at the 11 November 2024 Council meeting.

2. DEFINITIONS

Definitions for any words in **Bold** in this document can be found in the [Policy Glossary](#). The first instance of each defined term has been outlined in bold.

3. SCOPE

These rules apply to the operation of the Academic Approvals Committee.

4. RULES

Formation and structure of the committee

- 4.1 The committee will be formed at the October meeting of the AQC and will consist of the Academic Quality Officer and two other members of the AQC. Members of the AQC may be nominated or self-nominate and where the number of nominees exceeds the number of positions appointment will be by majority vote. Positions made vacant at other times may be filled by a process of nomination, and election where necessary, by the AQC outside of an official meeting.
- 4.2 The committee will involve two roles, that of Chair and Secretary. Members of the committee may self-nominate for the role of Chair and where more than one nomination is made the position will be decided on majority vote of the AQC. The Secretary role will be assigned to the Academic Quality Officer by default. Generally, a member of the committee may only operate in one role and thus the Academic Quality Officer will not be nominated for the role of Chair.
- 4.3 The primary responsibility of the Chair is to report to the AQC on behalf of the committee. It is the responsibility of the Secretary to facilitate communication between the committee and affiliated colleges including receiving requests,



processing requests to the committee, and informing colleges of the outcome of requests. The Secretary is also responsible for recording the outcome of requests in a form that may be presented to the AQC and Academic Board, updating the Moderation Portal, and maintaining a file of equivalency assessments to facilitate the process of annual review.

- 4.4 Appointment to the committee will be for a two-year period. Members of the committee may be re-appointed.

Processing requests

- 4.5 Requests for an approval from an affiliated college are directed to the Secretary of the committee who ensures all required information has been submitted. Once received, the Secretary will briefly summarise the case for making an approval at a specified level in a particular field. Alternatively, reasons for not making the approval are stated. The recommendation together with the request form and CV are circulated to the committee. The other members of the committee review the documentation and recommend either approving or not approving the request. Comments supporting the decision may be offered as deemed appropriate by the committee member, though comment should be provided in all cases where the recommendation is to *not* approve the request.
- 4.6 Where the highest relevant qualification for a proposed academic has been issued by an institution outside Australia, the recognition of the particular award will be determined by referring to the Country Education Profile portal. Where an award is recognised, the Secretary will advise the Academic Approvals Committee of the AQF level to attribute to the award for the calculation of the 'N' level.
- 4.7 An approval or rejection of a request is established by the majority decision of the committee. Where the initial response to a request is a split decision, the committee member representing the minority view may request further discussion of the request which will normally take place with the committee in attendance in person, by teleconference, or internet conference. The majority decision following the discussion will be final.
- 4.8 Following the decision of the committee, the Secretary will notify the college making the request of the outcome, which comes into effect immediately via the Moderation Portal.
- 4.9 Following the decision of the committee to approve an academic, the Secretary will email a copy of the AUT Faculty & Professional Staff Handbook to the academic.
- 4.10 Requests received are normally processed by the committee within a two-week timeframe.
- 4.11 The approval of 'Tutors' 'Guest Lecturers' and 'Markers' is outside the scope of the Faculty Qualification Policy and so the committee will not process requests for staff fitting these categories. The committee may act in an advisory capacity



for affiliated colleges which are responsible for ensuring the standards of the policy regarding these categories of staff are maintained.

- 4.12 Requests from an affiliated college to add a unit field within a department for which an academic is already approved can be completed by the Secretary and do not require approval from the committee. If the Secretary feels uneasy about this addition, the request should be referred to the committee for their decision.
- 4.13 Requests to add a department to the teaching assignment of an already approved academic are required to be submitted to the committee for approval.
- 4.14 A testimonial submitted as part of an equivalency assessment will meet the following requirements:
 - a) The testimonial should be written by an independent person, i.e. not someone employed by the college seeking approval for the academic;
 - b) The testimonial should be written by a person with in-depth knowledge of the academic;
 - c) The testimonial should be written by a person with an understanding of theological education in the Higher Education sector sufficient for them to recommend the academic for a teaching role in the unit field(s) at the proposed level;
 - d) The testimonial should address the academic's knowledge, skills, and experiences that relate to their capacity to teach in their proposed unit field(s) at the level of higher education being sought for the academic;
 - e) The testimonial should describe evidence of the academic's achievements relevant to the unit field and teaching level being sought for the academic; and
 - f) Testimonials written by former students of the academic may be used in support of other testimonials.
- 4.15 For units that have identical unit titles, unit content, and unit learning outcomes, and are in multiple unit fields or departments, academics that are approved to teach the unit in their approved department are also approved to teach the same unit(s) in all departments.
- 4.16 Where an academic is approved to teach at AQF level 9 or below and they have completed an AQF level 10 award their approval level will be amended to reflect their new award without referral to the Academic Approvals Committee. They will be approved at N+1 and the equivalency points (if any) will be removed from the Moderation Portal.
- 4.17 If an approved academic earns a new award (other than an AQF level 10 award) their approval level may be increased accordingly to the new award level to N+1 or N with equivalency without referring to the committee for approval. Changes to the approval levels will be reported at each AQC meeting.



Rules governing a conflict of interest and the temporary replacement of a committee member

- 4.18 Where a member(s) of the committee are unavailable to consider a request for approval another member of the AQC may carry out the duty in the case of the request. Unless they are already on the committee, the preferred member of the AQC is the Chair, the Deputy Chair or an external member of the AQC.
- 4.19 Members of the committee will declare a conflict of interest if the request relates to the college at which they are employed, or if they have a filial or close personal relationship with the proposed academic. In such cases another member of the AQC may stand in for them as under point 4.17 above.

Reporting to the AQC

- 4.20 The Academic Quality Officer maintains a record of all requests and the outcome for each which is presented to the AQC. A standing item on the agenda for each meeting of the AQC is a report of the committee which details the outcome of all requests and any significant changes in the operation of the committee. The role of the AQC in its meetings is to review the operation and decision-making of the committee in relation to the Faculty Qualification Policy and offer guidance and direction where appropriate. The AQC may not overturn a decision of the committee but may take the following actions:
- a) Where a request has not been approved and the AQC disagrees with the decision, the Chair of the AQC may advise the college making the request to appeal the decision with the Chair of the Academic Board.
 - b) Where an approval has been made based on an equivalency assessment and the AQC identifies concerns with the approval they may identify issues to be addressed at the review of the equivalency assessment at the October meeting of the AQC.
 - c) Where there are significant concerns about the operation of the committee, the AQC may pass a motion that the committee be dissolved and reformed. In such an event, existing members of the committee would not be excluded from the nominations.
- 4.21 It remains the responsibility of the AQC to annually review equivalency assessments for currency. This takes place at the October meeting of the AQC each year.

Objections

- 4.22 Objections against decisions of the committee from affiliated colleges should be directed to the Chair of the Academic Board as established under the Faculty Qualification Policy.

Revision of the rules



4.23 These rules will be reviewed and revised as necessary by the committee. All significant changes in the operation of the committee will be reported to the AQC.

5. RELATED LEGISLATION

[Australian Qualifications Framework \(Second Edition, January 2013\)](#)

[Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency \(TEQSA\) Act \(2011\)](#)

[Higher Education Standards Framework \(Threshold Standards\) \(2021\)](#)

6. VERSION HISTORY

Version	Approved by	Approval Date	Effective Date	Changes made
1	Academic Quality Committee	6 May 2016	6 May 2016	New guidelines.
2	Academic Quality Committee	12 July 2016	12 July 2016	Processing requests involving an equivalency assessment.
3	-	-	-	References to the Quality Officer changed to 'Secretary' in appropriate sections of the document. Clarified that Tutors and Guest Lecturers are not approved by the panel.
4	Academic Quality Committee	15 December 2017	15 December 2017	References to Progress Plan removed. Processing requests for approving additional unit fields and departments added.
5	Academic Quality Committee	12 October 2018	12 October 2018	Requirements for testimonials submitted as part of an equivalency assessment (4.13 a-f) added.
6	Academic Quality Committee	1 March 2019	1 March 2019	Mentoring requirements (14.4 a-c). Change of title Quality Assurance Office
7	Academic Quality Committee	20 December 2021	20 December 2021	Insert new clause 4.15 allowing academics automatic approval if approved to teach in a unit that has the identical unit in another department.
8	Academic Quality Committee	13 October 2023	13 October 2023	Updated hyperlinks to related legislation. Remove 4.14 as points can no longer be earned in the Faculty Qualification Policy for 'Mentored according to AUT guidelines.' Updated



				to include the Moderation Portal to manage the administration of academic approvals and reference to Markers.
9	Academic Quality Committee	21 February 2025	21 February 2025	Renaming of the Academic Approvals Panel to Academic Approvals Committee. New clause 4.15 & 4.16 where already approved academics gain a new award and respective change in approval level. Change the word 'appeals' to 'objections' against committee decisions. Addition of 4.9 email newly approved academics AUT Handbook
10	Vice-Chancellor	February 2025	February 2025	Update to new document template; minor editorial updates to implement University status.

Any hard copy of this electronic document may not be current as the AUT regularly reviews its rules.