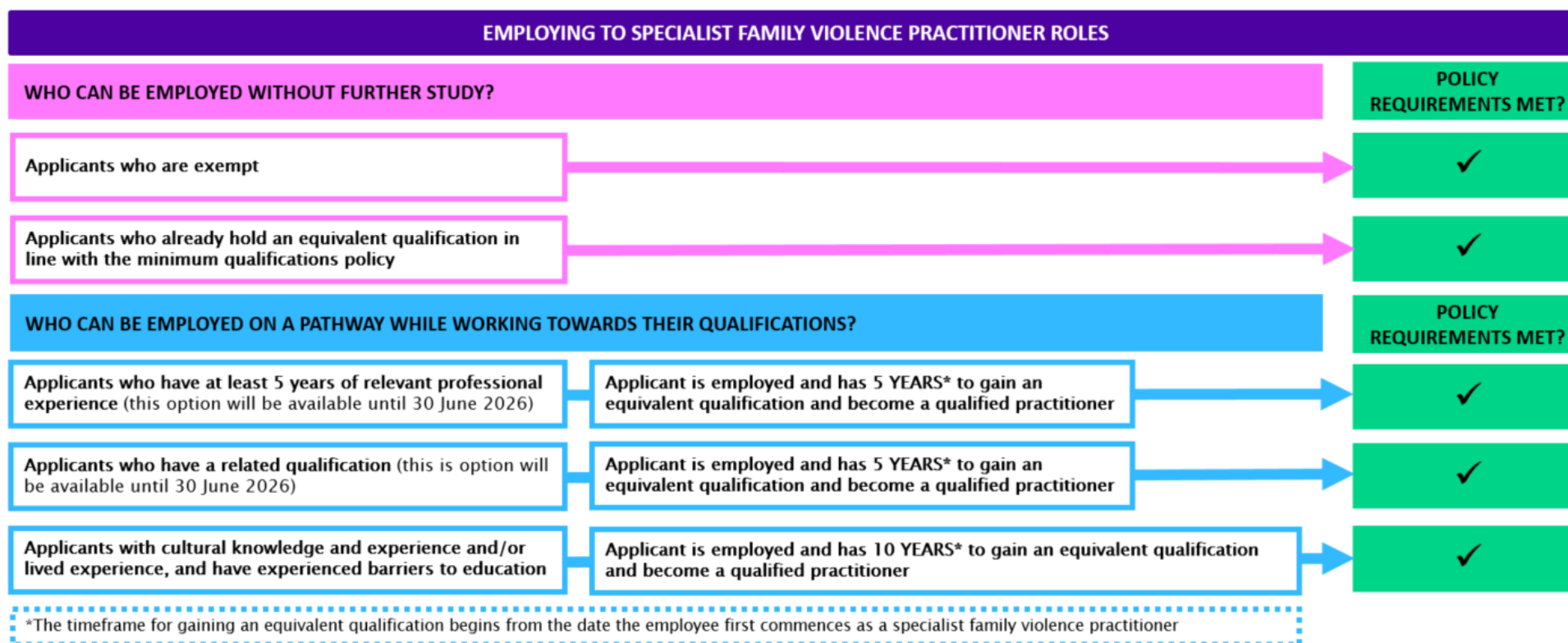


# Mandatory Minimum Qualifications Tip Sheet: Applications and Decision Making

This tip sheet has been designed to assist candidates and recruiters to understand elements of the mandatory minimum qualifications policy (the policy), which requires new specialist family violence practitioners to hold an appropriate qualification or be employed on a pathway while working towards one. It is a guide on what useful information a candidate should include in their application, and to provide clarity about who is responsible for deciding whether elements of the policy have been met. Please always refer to the official [mandatory minimum qualifications policy](https://www.vic.gov.au/mandatory-minimum-qualifications-specialist-family-violence-practitioners) found here: <https://www.vic.gov.au/mandatory-minimum-qualifications-specialist-family-violence-practitioners>.

There are two stages to being considered for employment as a specialist family violence practitioner: (1) being a good fit for the position description and selection criteria; and (2) being able to be employed in line with the policy. The policy is still in its introductory transition period and workforce shortages are providing ongoing challenges for the sector. Candidates who feel they are a good fit for the position description and meet the selection criteria for a role but are not sure whether they meet the requirements of the policy or fit one of the employment pathways are strongly encouraged to apply.



## When is a candidate exempt from needing to meet the minimum qualifications?

### How is this requirement met?

To be exempt a worker must have:

1. Previously worked in a role that required them to provide direct family violence specialist services to victim survivors and/or people using violence such as:
  - Family violence safety planning
  - Family violence assessment and intake
  - Family violence case management and service navigation
- AND
2. Worked in this role prior to 1 July 2021.

There is no minimum amount of time a person must have been working in such a role prior to 1 July 2021.

A worker must maintain continuous service to preserve this exemption which means not having a break of more than 4 consecutive years from a role with these responsibilities.

Changing employers does not have an effect on exemption.

### What can a candidate do to support their application?

A candidate who believes they are exempt should articulate this in their cover letter, pointing out any relevant roles they have held where they have provided direct family violence specialist services to victim survivors and/or people using violence.

They may wish to ask their (pre 1 July 2021) employer for a letter confirming that they are an exempt employee.

### Who makes the decision?

**Future employers** will consider the work history of a candidate, ask referees and/or consider a letter from a current/previous employer and make the determination as to whether a candidate is exempt.

**Current employers** can provide staff with a letter confirming they were working in a specialist family violence practitioner role prior to 1 July 2021 and are therefore exempt.

### Is further study required?

No, exempt practitioners are not required by the policy to undertake any further study.

When does a candidate have an equivalent qualification?

How is this requirement met?

An equivalent qualification is a qualification or combination of qualifications and/or accredited training that meets all 7 equivalency principles through accredited training. Personal knowledge, experience and (non-accredited) professional development is not able to be used to satisfy equivalency principles.

To meet all 7 equivalency principles the candidate must **hold a Bachelor or higher level qualification (AQF level 7 or higher) that meets at least 4 equivalency principles**, with the remaining equivalency principles met through accredited training at any level (see page 4 for an explanation of accredited training).

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| Equivalency principle 1 | Must meet this equivalency principle and at least 3 other equivalency principles through studies at Bachelor or higher level.                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Equivalency principle 2 | <div>At least 3 of these equivalency principles must be met through studies at AQF level 7 or higher:</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Bachelor</li><li>• Graduate Certificate</li><li>• Graduate Diploma</li><li>• Masters or PhD</li></ul> | <div>Any remaining equivalency principles can be met through any level of formal <u>accredited</u> training that has been delivered through Vocational Education and Training or University studies.</div> |
| Equivalency principle 3 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Equivalency principle 4 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Equivalency principle 5 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Equivalency principle 6 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Equivalency principle 7 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                            |

What can a candidate do to support their application?

A candidate who meets the selection criteria of a role (to the satisfaction of an employer) and holds an equivalent qualification is able to be employed, and no further formal training is required by the policy.

Family Safety Victoria have mapped some qualifications as being equivalent **but the list is not exhaustive**. These are found in the Qualifications Mapping Document.

For training and qualifications that haven't been mapped, a candidate should carefully consider the accredited studies they have undertaken and be able to identify the level this training was taken at. Once this information is identified, the Safe and Equal manual mapping tool may help give an indication as to whether the studies could be equivalent.

Where a qualification isn't listed, the employer may ask the candidate to fill in a manual mapping template, and may wish to see proof of completion through transcripts or statements of attainment For an employer to consider their qualifications, a candidate should be able to provide the name of the accredited unit/subject/training they undertook as it relates to each equivalency principle, and the

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|                                | <p>level it was taken at.. Personal knowledge, experience and (non-accredited) professional development is not able to be used to satisfy equivalency principles.</p> <p>Where a candidate believes they hold an equivalent qualification they should state this in their cover letter.</p>                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Who makes the decision?</b> | <p><b>Future employers</b> will determine whether they are satisfied that the <u>accredited</u> studies meet the knowledge areas articulated in each equivalency principle and that at least 4 of the equivalency principles were completed at Bachelor or higher level.</p> <p><b>Current employers</b> who have assessed an employee as holding an equivalent qualification can provide the staff member with a letter confirming this assessment.</p> |

## What is accredited training?

### How is this requirement met?



Accredited training may be undertaken through universities or through the Vocational Education and Training (VET) system.

Courses/subjects studied within the following qualifications will be accredited:

- Certificate I, II, III, IV
- Diploma, Advanced Diploma
- Bachelor, Graduate Certificate, Graduate Diploma, Masters or PhD

VET courses are commonly delivered by TAFEs and Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) but note that not all training delivered by an RTO will be accredited.

Accredited RTO training will lead to a statement of attainment. The title of these training courses begin with the words "Course in..." and the statement of attainment will include the Nationally Recognised Training logo.

If providing accredited training, most training providers will state this fact on the course page of their website/brochure.

*Note: personal knowledge, experience and (non-accredited) professional development is not able to be used to satisfy equivalency principles*

### What can a candidate do to support their application?

If not specified by an employer, candidates can wait until later in the recruitment process to supply copies of transcripts and other proof of attainment.

Employers may request dates and records of studies. This might include statements of attainment or transcripts of a candidate's VET/University studies.

### Who makes the decision?

There is no employer discretion in determining whether a course is accredited. University courses are accredited by the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency. VET training courses are accredited by the Australian Skills Quality Authority or the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority.

## When does a candidate have a related qualification?

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| <b>How is this requirement met?</b>                          | <p>A related qualification is one that meets <b>at least 4 equivalency principles</b> through <u>accredited</u> training at any level (see page 4 for an explanation of <u>accredited</u> training). Personal knowledge, experience and (non-accredited) professional development is <b>not</b> able to be used to satisfy equivalency principles.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>What can a candidate do to support their application?</b> | <p>A candidate who meets the selection criteria of a role (to the satisfaction of an employer) and holds a related qualification is able to be employed and work towards an equivalent qualification over a 5 year period.</p> <p>Family Safety Victoria have mapped some qualifications as being related <b>but the list is not exhaustive</b>. These are found in the <u>Qualifications Mapping Document</u>.</p> <p>For training and qualifications that haven't been mapped, a candidate should carefully consider the <u>accredited</u> studies they have undertaken and be able to identify the level this training was taken at. Once this information is identified, the Safe and Equal <u>manual mapping tool</u> may help give an indication as to whether the studies could be related.</p> <p>Where a qualification isn't listed, the employer may ask the candidate to fill in a <u>manual mapping template</u>, and may wish to see proof of completion through transcripts or statements of attainment For an employer to consider their qualifications, a candidate should be able to provide the name of the <u>accredited</u> unit/subject/training they undertook as it relates to each equivalency principle, and the level it was taken at. Personal knowledge, experience and (non-accredited) professional development is not able to be used to satisfy equivalency principles.</p> <p>Where a candidate believes they hold a related qualification they should state this in their cover letter along with an acknowledgement they are willing to undertake further study.</p> <p>Where a candidate has already been assessed as holding a related qualification and is now looking to change employers, the candidate could offer to provide a copy of their <u>Learning Development Plan</u> as part of their application.</p> |
| <b>Who makes the decision?</b>                               | <p><b>Future employers</b> will determine whether they are satisfied that the <u>accredited</u> studies meet the knowledge areas articulated in each equivalency principle, and that at least 4 have been met.</p> <p>For candidates who commenced as new practitioners after 1 July 2021 and are changing employers, future employers could request a copy of the candidate's <u>Learning Development Plan</u>.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |

## When does a candidate have 5 years of relevant professional experience?

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| <b>How is this requirement met?</b>                          | What is considered “relevant” professional experience isn’t specified in the policy and is up to the organisation to determine, but it might include working in homelessness, child protection, sexual assault services, nursing and many other sectors.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>What can a candidate do to support their application?</b> | <p>A candidate who meets the selection criteria of a role (to the satisfaction of an employer) and has 5 years of relevant professional experience is able to be employed as a practitioner and work towards an equivalent qualification over a 5 year period.</p> <p>A candidate who believes they hold relevant experience should articulate this in their cover letter, pointing out any relevant roles they have held, along with an acknowledgement they are willing to undertake further study.</p> <p>Where a candidate has already been assessed as holding relevant experience and is now looking to change employers, the candidate could offer to provide a copy of their <u>Learning Development Plan</u> as part of their application.</p> |
| <b>Who makes the decision?</b>                               | <p><b>Future employers</b> determine whether they consider a candidate’s experience is “relevant” and whether they have at least 5 years of relevant experience.</p> <p>For a candidate who commenced as new practitioners after 1 July 2021 and is changing employers, future employers could request a copy of the candidate’s <u>Learning Development Plan</u></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |

**When does a candidate have significant cultural knowledge and experience and/or lived experience and the candidate has experienced barriers to accessing educational pathways?**

**How is this requirement met?**

People with cultural knowledge and lived experience bring strength and value to a workplace. Examples of lived experience and/or cultural knowledge include but are not limited to: Aboriginal people, people with disability, people from LGBTIQ communities, people from multicultural communities or with migrant or refugee experience, and those with lived experience of family violence.

What constitutes a barrier to education is not specified but might include: financial difficulties, family responsibilities, disability or ill-health, living in a regional or remote area, systemic barriers, discrimination, and barriers caused by the violence or controlling behavior of others. A candidate may have some education and still have experienced barriers to education.

**What can a candidate do to support their application?**

Fitting these circumstances will allow a candidate who meets the selection criteria of a role (to the satisfaction of an employer) to be employed and work towards an equivalent qualification over a 10 year period.

For a candidate who applies under this pathway, the cover letter could include a brief description of the cultural knowledge and experience and/or lived experience they feel will support them to meet the key selection criteria. Any barriers to education can be noted, along with an acknowledgement that formal study will be required.

A candidate who doesn't feel comfortable identifying that they fit this pathway at the initial application stage could state 'I have relevant lived experience and have experienced barriers which have prevented and interrupted my access to education. I am motivated to undertake further formal study to meet the minimum mandatory qualifications.'

In an interview employers may want to know how a candidate's cultural knowledge contributes to the selection criteria and makes them a good fit for the role.

It is unlikely an employer will ask directly about a candidate's lived experience. How much a candidate discloses about their lived experience is their choice.

**Who makes the decision?**

**Future employers** determine whether a candidate has identified cultural knowledge and experience and/or lived experience and should ensure that their interview is conducted in a culturally safe manner.

**Future employers** determine whether they feel a candidate has experienced barriers to education. This may be clearly articulated by the candidate or it may be something the employer deems as self-evident based on the candidate's background and experience.

## When is a Learning Development Plan created?

### How is this requirement met?

New practitioners who are employed on a pathway will have either 5 or 10 years to meet the minimum qualification requirements from when they first commence as a practitioner and will need to set up a Learning Development Plan. The requirement to complete further study may form part of the employment contract.

The Learning Development Plan should be set up as soon as a new practitioner commences in a role in scope, but when the proposed study will actually commence is flexible and will depend on many factors including: personal circumstances, intake dates for courses, and any work experience the candidate has to accrue to be eligible for entry into a specific qualification.

### What can a candidate do to support their application?

Learning Development Plans only need to be set up for pathway practitioners once they commence in their role, but a candidate who has already decided what accredited training they will undertake to gain an equivalent qualification may wish to make a note of this in their cover letter. This signals to the future employer an awareness of the obligation to undertake further study.

For a new practitioner, identifying the specific accredited qualification/training they wish to undertake (and when to commence it) may take some time to work through, as there are many options available for a candidate to achieve an equivalent qualification and many factors to consider.

The Learning Development Plan should travel with the new practitioner if they change employers, and can be updated and changed as needed. A new practitioner changing organisations could offer to provide a copy of their current plan with their application.

### Who makes the decision?

**New practitioners** determine what further study they wish to undertake and when to commence it but their chosen learning plan must satisfy their **employer** that the studies will lead to the new practitioner achieving an equivalent qualification within the required time period.

Learning Development Plans may be amended at any time and should be monitored periodically to ensure the new practitioner is on track to achieving an equivalent qualification within the required time period.