

QAF025 CREDIT FOR PRIOR LEARNING POLICY AND PROCEDURE

1. Overview

Granting credit for prior learning ensures that students commence study at a level that appropriately recognises their prior learning experiences and are not required to repeat equivalent learning successfully undertaken in another context.

The Higher Education Leadership Institute (“the Institute”) is committed to develop open and accessible guidelines to grant credit towards a course of study based on prior learning, whether from formal studies or professional work experience.

This policy is designed to both maximise the credit students can gain for learning already undertaken and preserve the integrity of learning outcomes or discipline requirements of the award to which it applies.

This policy incorporates the best practice principles outlined in the *AQF Qualifications Pathways Policy*¹.

The Institute's policy on the granting of credit will:

- be evidence based, clear, equitable, accessible and transparent;
- be applied consistently and fairly with decisions subject to review;
- recognise prior learning regardless of how, when and where it was acquired, provided that the prior learning is relevant and current and has a relationship to the learning outcomes of the course;
- be academically defensible and account for the students’ chance of success in a course and that a student will not be disadvantaged in achieving a course’s expected learning outcomes;
- ensure the integrity of the course of study and resulting qualification are maintained;
- be decided in a timely way;
- ensure that pathways into and between awards are available to all students by furthering articulation pathways with other higher education and vocational training providers and facilitating transfer between courses at the Institute;
- be formally documented for the student, including any reasons for not granting credit.

2. Granting of credit

2.1 General principles

- i. Entry to the Institute’s courses is based on specific published entry criteria and decisions regarding student selection will be in accordance with the *Student Selection and Admissions Policy and Procedure (QAF100)*.
- ii. An offer of credit does not guarantee admission into a specific course.

¹ Australian Qualifications Framework Handbook – January 2013

- iii. The assessment of the amount of credit to be granted in specific courses shall be determined by the Institute within the framework of this policy and must be reviewed by the Academic Quality Committee.
- iv. Regardless of the credit granted, the requirements of each course must be fulfilled.
- v. Credit can be given in the form of block, specified or unspecified credit.
- vi. Candidates for an award from the Institute are required to complete a minimum amount of the course through the Institute. The total credit granted for prior learning external to the Institute shall not exceed 50% of the total credit points required for the award toward which credit is sought. The 50% may comprise a mixture of credit for formal study and credit for work experience, however normally no more than 25% credit will be granted for learning from relevant and documented work experience.
- vii. Credit granted for a specific course cannot automatically be transferred from one course to another.

2.2 Credit for formal studies

- i. Credit will not normally be granted for formal study completed more than ten years prior to application unless there is evidence of continued relevance of this study for the course towards which credit is sought.
- ii. Credit may be granted for the successful completion of:
 - a. subjects or units of study which form part of an accredited course provided by a recognised higher education provider;
 - b. non-award courses offered by a recognised higher education provider;
 - c. accredited courses at AQF Level 5 and above offered by a registered vocational training provider;
 - d. professional development or professional recognition courses provided by a professional association or other similar body;
 - e. training delivered by employers or other similar training.
- iii. Credit shall be granted where there is substantial overlap with content and/or learning outcomes of the Institute subject for which credit is claimed.
- iv. When assessing credit for formal studies the following will be accounted for:
 - a. the general educational practices and standards of the provider(s) or any accreditation obtained by such provider that may be relevant to the course under consideration;
 - b. the objectives of the specific course and the methods adopted to achieve those objectives;
 - c. admission requirements to the course;
 - d. the duration of the course, having regard to entry requirements and course objectives;
 - e. the breadth, depth and balance in the course material involved and the intellectual effort required;
 - f. the methods of assessment;

- g. the relative emphasis on the teaching of skills in relation to the study of the discipline;
- h. any arrangements for practical training and experience as part of the course.

2.3 Credit for learning from work experience

- i. Credit may be granted for work experience where that learning can be documented to the satisfaction of the Institute. The onus shall be on the applicant to provide appropriate evidence or demonstrate the relevant skills, knowledge and understanding.
- ii. The maximum credit that can be granted for learning from work experience is normally 25% of the total credit points required for the course toward which credit is sought.
- iii. When assessing credit for work experience, the following will be accounted for:
 - a. Authenticity - the applicant has demonstrated the learning outcomes that are being claimed;
 - b. Currency - the learning outcomes are still valid and performable;
 - c. Quality - the learning has reached the acceptable level;
 - d. Relevance - the learning is applicable to the subject claimed;
 - e. Transferability - the learning outcome can be applied outside the specific context in which it was learned;
 - f. Comparability - the prior learning is comparable in content and standard with the subject(s) in which credit is sought.

2.4 Internal transfer between courses

- i. Credit may be granted when a student has completed subjects while undertaking a course with the Institute and wishes to transfer to another course within the Institute.
- ii. Credit will be granted for those subjects already undertaken which form part of the course into which the student is transferring.
- iii. The maximum credit that can be granted in these circumstances is not limited.

3. Applications

An application for credit based on prior learning must be made on the *Application for Credit for Prior Learning [FRM015]*, preferably at the time of application for admission to a course. The application should be accompanied by documentary evidence sufficient to support the request for credit.

Assessment of the application will be undertaken by the Course Coordinator who will advise the Operations Manager by email of the outcome of the application within 15 working days on the finalised *Application for Credit for Prior Learning [FRM015]*.

The Operations Manager will then notify the applicant in writing of the result of their application within 20 working days on the *Outcome of Application for Credit for Prior Learning [FRM016a or FRM016b]*. This will usually be done at the same time as making an offer of admission to a course.

Applicants must accept the offer of credit in writing on the *Outcome of Application for Credit for Prior Learning [FRM016a or FRM016b]* for the credit to be recognised as part of their course.

A record of any credit granted (including any reasons for not giving credit) and its acceptance will be maintained on the student's file.

All decisions in relation to the granting of credit are entered into the *Register of CPL Outcomes and Reviews* by the Operations Manager. The Register is provided as an annual report for review by the Academic Quality Committee.

4. International students applying for credit

If the applicant is an international student applying for a study visa the following applies:

- i. Where credit is granted before the issue of a visa, the actual course duration in the CoE issued to the student will be reduced and noted in the *Letter of Offer and Student Agreement [FRM012]*.
- ii. Where credit is granted after the issue of a visa, the Institute will report the change of course duration via PRISMS.

If an international student is granted credit that shortens their course, it remains a visa condition that they continue to study full-time.

International students will be provided with a written record of the decision on the *Advice of Outcome of CPL Application (international student) [FRM016b]* to enable the student to accept the offer of credit once their visa has been granted. The written record of acceptance will be retained for at least two years after the international student ceases to be an accepted student.

5. Articulation arrangements (credit agreements)²

In line with national policy, and where appropriate, the Institute will systematically negotiate agreements with other tertiary education providers to maximise the credit available to eligible students for entry into the Institute's courses, where appropriate. These agreements will provide graduates of specific courses offered by recognised providers of tertiary education credit for specific subjects that form part of an Institute course.

When negotiating such agreements, the Institute will take into account the comparability and equivalence of the articulating institution's course, notably:

- the learning outcomes;
- the volume of learning;
- the content; and
- learning and assessment approaches.

In order to assess the quantum of credit which may be awarded, the Institute will map the specified learning outcomes for the course provided by the external institution against the learning outcomes of subjects within the relevant Institute course. Credit for a subject within the Institute course will only be granted where there is a substantial match against the learning outcomes of that subject.

The benchmarks for the quantum of credit normally granted to students towards higher level AQF qualifications in the same or related discipline are as follows:

² For the purposes of the Australian Qualifications Framework 2011 articulation agreements are known as 'Credit Transfer Arrangements'. Articulation arrangements are also colloquially known as 'pathways'.

- 50% credit for an Advanced Diploma or Associate Degree linked to a 3-year Bachelor Degree.
- 37.5% credit for an Advanced Diploma or Associate Degree linked to a 4-year Bachelor Degree.
- 33% credit for a Diploma linked to a 3-year Bachelor Degree.
- 25% credit for a Diploma linked to a 4-year Bachelor Degree.

The existence of a credit agreement does not preclude an individual student applying for additional credit under this policy.

The Academic Board will approve all articulation arrangements after evidence of the mapping of the learning outcomes of the external course against the Institute course underpinning the proposed credit arrangements has been considered.

Once approved by the Academic Board the articulation arrangement will be set out in a formal credit agreement, signed by both parties and recorded in a register of approved articulation agreements.

The Institute will make publicly available details of all current credit agreements in accordance with section 2.3 of the *AQF Qualifications Pathways Policy*³.

5.1 Internal articulation arrangements

The Institute may develop internal articulation arrangements to enable graduates of lower AQF level courses offered by the Institute to articulate to higher AQF level courses offered by the Institute, where appropriate. The process for developing these arrangements and determining the quantum of credit will be the same for external articulation arrangements.

6. Review of a decision regarding the granting credit

A student⁴ may request a review of a decision on the granting of credit. The grounds for a review are that the decision is inconsistent with this policy. Requests must be made in writing and lodged via: info@heli.edu.au for the attention of the Dean within ten working days of the student receiving written notification of the decision. The Dean will respond to the request for a review within twenty working days and may confirm or vary the decision.

If a student remains dissatisfied with the outcome of their request for a review of a decision regarding the granting of credit they may utilise the Institute's *Student Grievance Handling Policy and Procedure [QAF090]*.

All decisions made by the Dean in relation to reviews under this policy will be reported to and reviewed by the Academic Quality Committee.

7. Related documentation

- FRM012 Letter of Offer and Student Agreement_international
- FRM015 Application for Credit for Prior Learning Application form

³ As set out in the Australian Qualifications Framework Handbook – January 2013.

⁴ For the purposes of this policy the term student may also refer to a prospective student who has lodged an application for admission to a course.

- FRM016a Outcome of Application for CPL_domestic student
- FRM016b Outcome of Application for CPL_international student
- FRM070 Register of CPL Outcomes and Reviews
- QAF001 Quality Framework
- QAF090 Student Grievance Handling Policy and Procedure

8. Publication and review

This policy will be made available to all prospective and existing students on the Institute’s website to enable them to make well-informed choices between alternative pathways and to account for the credit that may be available to them. Prospective students will be advised in pre-enrolment information about this policy.

This policy will be regularly reviewed to maximise applicability to new and updated awards and to student and industry needs in line with section 4.3 of the Institute’s *Quality Framework [QAF001]*.

9. Version history

Version	Approved by	Approval Date	Details
1.0	Academic Board	20 April 2016	Document creation and initial approval
1.1	Dean	23 September 2016	Minor change to set timeframe for written response to application for CPL
1.2	Dean	3 November 2016	Change nomenclature regarding appeals Change to titles
1.3	Dean	21 April 2017	Minor change to wording in section 2.2 to better reflect professional development courses
1.4	Dean	23 April 2018	Minor changes to wording to reflect actual practice
2.0	Academic Board	5 June 2019	Changes to accommodate international students
2.1	Academic Board	4 March 2020	Change to section 4 to ensure international students have an opportunity to accept an offer of credit
2.2	Dean	4 May 2020	Update administrative process for advising outcomes of CPL applications
3.0	Academic Board	20 May 2022	Scheduled review

Document owner: Dean