

## Award of Credit Policy

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## 1. Purpose

Higher Education Leadership Institute (HELI) is committed to the ideals of lifelong learning and recognises the need to facilitate continued opportunities for the pursuit of formal education through the recognition of previous learning.

This policy outlines the principles, procedures and limits for the recognition of an individual's prior learning and experience through the awarding of credit towards a HELI award course through credit transfer, recognition of prior learning (RPL), or articulation.

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

## 2. Scope

This Policy applies to all HELI current and prospective postgraduate coursework students seeking credit towards an Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) recognised award offered by HELI.

## 3. Definitions

Term	Definition
<i>AQF</i>	The Australian Qualifications Framework is a national framework which describes the minimum standards and levels of Australian qualifications and award courses.
<i>Articulation Arrangements</i>	"Articulation arrangements enable students to progress from a completed qualification to another with admission and/or credit in a defined qualification pathway" (AQF, 2013).
<i>Block Credit</i>	Block credit is a form of credit granted towards whole stages or components of an officially accredited qualification or program of learning.
<i>Census Date</i>	The last date a student can withdraw from a unit without being financially liable i.e. having to pay for the unit.
<i>Course</i>	A structured sequence of study undertaken at a recognised higher education provider, leading to the award of a degree, diploma, certificate or other recognised qualification.
<i>Credit</i>	Credit is the value assigned for the recognition of equivalence in content and learning outcomes between different types of learning and/or qualifications. Credit reduces the amount of learning required to be undertaken to achieve a qualification and may be attained through credit transfer, recognition of prior learning or articulation.
<i>Credit Transfer</i>	"Credit transfer is a process that provides students with agreed and consistent credit outcomes for components of a qualification based on identified equivalence in content and learning outcomes between matched qualifications" (AQF, 2013).

<i>Currency</i>	The period during which prior learning or qualifications are considered current, defined as 10 years from the date of original achievement.
<i>Credit Transfer Arrangement</i>	A credit transfer arrangement defines the availability of credit transfer from one qualification to another.
<i>Formal Learning</i>	“Formal learning is the learning that takes place through a structured program of learning that leads to the full or partial achievement of an officially accredited qualification” (AQF, 2013, p.95).
<i>Informal Learning</i>	“Informal learning is learning gained through work, social, family, hobby or leisure activities and experiences. Unlike formal or non-formal learning, informal learning is not organised or externally structured in terms of objectives, time or learning support” (AQF, 2013, p.96).
<i>Non formal Learning</i>	“Non-formal learning refers to learning that takes place through a structured program of learning but does not lead to an officially accredited qualification. See also formal and informal learning” (AQF, 2013, p.98).
<i>Recognition of Prior Learning</i>	“Recognition of prior learning is an assessment process that involves assessment of an individual’s relevant prior learning (including formal, informal and non-formal learning) to determine the credit outcomes of an individual application for credit (National Quality Council Training Packages glossary)” (AQF, 2013, p.99).
<i>Register of Outcomes</i>	A database in which details of the outcomes of assessments of applications for recognition of prior learning are recorded.
<i>Specified Credit</i>	Specified credit is a form of credit granted towards the core and/or specified components of an officially accredited qualification or program of learning.
<i>Unspecified Credit</i>	Unspecified credit is a form of credit that may be granted towards elective components of an officially accredited qualification or program of learning.
<i>Unit</i>	A component of an award course with specified assessment requirements for which a final grade is awarded upon completion.
<i>Uncredentialed learning</i>	Knowledge and skills acquired through relevant in-service programs, work experience and other experiential learning.

#### 4. Principles

When granting credit through RPL or when entering into a credit arrangement with other providers, HELI will:

- comply and be consistent with applicable Australian laws, regulations and standards, including those enunciated in the VET Quality Framework, the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 and the AQF;
- preserve the integrity of learning outcomes and discipline requirements of the award qualification to which the credit applies;
- consider the comparability and equivalence of the learning outcomes, volume of learning, the program of study previously undertaken, including content, and approaches to learning and assessment of previous learning;

- recognise accredited awards and statements of attainment issued by any Australian commonwealth, state or territory authorised issuing organisation (or comparable international equivalents); and
- recognise that learning can be formal, non-formal or informal, though not all of these may be applicable to all forms of credit.

## 5. Policy

HELI may award credit in the form of block, specified or unspecified credit through articulation, credit transfer or RPL in accordance with this policy.

For current HELI articulation or common credit transfer arrangements, specified, block or unspecified credit will be granted to an individual consistent with the arrangements described in policy according to the following principles:

- the amount of credit granted is determined by the specified articulation or common credit transfer arrangement; and
- the individual must have fully satisfied all terms of the specified articulation or credit transfer arrangement to be granted credit based on the arrangement.

Determining the awarding of credit requires academic judgement. This applies when making decisions about block, specified or unspecified credit, articulation or RPL. Staff determining the granting of credit must ensure the decision concerning the granting of credit into or towards an award:

- is evidence based, clear, equitable, accessible and transparent;
- is applied consistently and fairly with decisions subject to review;
- recognises 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;
- is academically defensible and accounts for the students' chance of success in a course;
- ensures that a student will not be disadvantaged in achieving a course's expected learning outcomes;
- ensures the integrity of the course of study and resulting qualification are maintained;
- is decided in a timely way; and
- is formally documented for the student, including any reasons for not granting credit.

## 6. Procedures

### 6.1 *Articulations and Credit Transfer Arrangements*

#### 6.1.1 Articulation

In line with national policy<sup>1</sup>, and where appropriate, HELI will systematically negotiate agreements with other tertiary education providers to maximise the credit available to eligible students for entry

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.aqf.edu.au/publication/aqf-qualifications-pathways-policy>

into the HELI's courses. These agreements will provide graduates of specific courses offered by recognised providers of tertiary education credit for specific units that form part of a HELI course.

Articulation arrangements are based on student achievement through formal learning and provide a seamless pathway with automatic admission into one qualification from another.

Articulation arrangements may include:

- clustered qualifications involving lower qualifications that are embedded completely in the next qualification with multiple exit and entry points (an articulated suite of qualifications);
- partially clustered qualifications that include some qualification components of the lower-level qualification nested into the linked qualification;
- arrangements where two separately designed qualifications are linked to each other to form a defined qualification linkage and credit pathway.

The amount of credit as agreed by the organisations in an articulation arrangement will be applied automatically to any student on successful completion of the previous qualification in the articulation agreement.

### **6.1.2 Credit transfer**

HELI may award credit by credit transfer for units undertaken through prior formal learning based on identified equivalence in content and learning outcomes between matched, officially accredited qualifications or programs of learning. The amount of credit to be awarded must be in accordance with this policy. The agreed credit outcomes may include any form of credit: block, specified or unspecified credit.

### **6.1.3 Establishment of articulation agreements and common credit transfer arrangements**

HELI may systematically establish formalised, time-bound, articulation arrangements and/or common credit transfer arrangements between its accredited qualifications and other authorised issuing organisations. These may be across AQF qualifications at the same level, as well as between qualifications at different levels. They are established based on the assessment of equivalence between qualifications and/or the way in which the discipline areas of two qualifications are suited to articulation.

This considers:

- whether the articulation or credit transfer arrangement will result in a logical sequential qualification pathway for entry into and/or credit transfer towards the same or a higher level AQF qualification; and
- the comparability and equivalence of the learning outcomes, volume of learning, program of study (including content), and learning and assessment approaches.

### **6.1.4 Guidelines for establishing articulation and credit transfer arrangements**

Articulation will be based on linking one qualification to another higher-level qualification to establish content relationships and equivalence between them, making a judgment about any credit outcomes between the linked qualifications, and setting out the agreed credit outcomes and the

defined pathway between the linked qualifications in a documented agreement which is publicly available.

The credit transfer process will be based on mapping, comparing and evaluating the extent to which the learning outcome, discipline content and assessment requirements of the individual components of one qualification are equivalent to the learning outcomes, discipline content and assessment requirements of the individual components of another qualification.

The granting of credit through an articulation or credit transfer arrangement does not preclude any further institutional or individual student negotiations for additional credit.

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

The Academic Board will approve all articulation arrangements after evidence of the mapping of the learning outcomes of the external course against the Institute's 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.

HELI will make details of all current credit agreements publicly available in accordance with Section 2.3 of the *AQF Qualifications Pathways Policy*.

## **6.2 Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) / Awarding of Credit**

### **6.2.1 RPL/Credit assessment and award process**

HELI may award credit through Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) for a higher education level unit on the basis of either:

- prior formal learning, or
- a combination of prior formal learning with prior non-formal and/or informal learning.

HELI will:

- identify the evidence required;
- provide advice to students about the process;
- provide students with sufficient information to enable them to prepare their evidence to meet the requirements of the RPL assessment process;
- assess the application using appropriate evidence-mapping methods and tools;
- record the outcome and RPL assessment;
- ensure that, as with all assessment, decisions about the award of credit are undertaken by academic or teaching staff with expertise in the subject, content or skills area, as well as knowledge of and expertise in RPL assessment;
- recognise learning regardless of how, when and where it was acquired, provided the learning is relevant to the learning outcomes in the qualification;

- ensure that the evidence provided is valid, authentic, current and sufficient and that the process is fair, flexible, reliable and valid; and
- advise students of any RPL awarded in writing and require students to return a signed copy of that advice which the Institute will keep on the student's record as per the *Student Records Management Policy*.

Professional accreditation guidelines for some of HELI's academic programs may require that some units are taught within the course at a HELI campus. In these programs, RPL will not be approved.

Credit may be awarded for undergraduate units towards postgraduate qualifications in a cognate discipline area.

### 6.2.2 Applications for RPL/credit

Applications for RPL/credit must be completed using the HELI *Recognition of Prior Learning Form* and lodged online via the HELI website.

Applications for RPL/credit, including all required supporting documentation, must be lodged online at least ten (10) working days before the census date of the student's first study period at HELI. Applications lodged after this date will not be considered unless the student can demonstrate there were circumstances beyond their control that prevented them from submitting an application by the required date.

A student must not enrol in a unit for which they have applied or intend to apply for RPL/credit. An application for RPL/credit for a unit in which a student is enrolled at census date for the study period in question will not be considered.

Applications for RPL/credit on the grounds of successfully completed studies at a recognised higher education or vocational institution must be supported by the following:

- original or officially certified copies of academic transcripts or testamurs; and
- institutional course guides, unit guides, or similar materials that describe the course and unit contents, including learning outcomes.

If official documents are not available, officially certified copies must be presented. Certified copies are official copies that have been authenticated by an awarding body (university or college), or a Justice of Peace or by an authorised agent.

Applications for RPL/credit on the grounds of uncredentialed learning or relevant work experience require evidence that the relevant Course and Unit Learning Outcomes have been achieved. This may be demonstrated by:

- certified copies of statements from employers; and/or
- certificates or evidence of uncredentialed or informal learning such as short courses, MOOCs, community activity, or volunteer work; and/or
- a portfolio prepared by the student with a narrative explaining how the student's relevant work experience results in the achievement of the learning outcomes; and/or
- an appropriate form of written or oral assessment; and/or
- other written or oral presentations acceptable to the Course Coordinator.

Applicants holding an overseas qualification(s) which is not in English must provide the original transcripts and testamur(s) and submit approved translations of those documents. HELI will only accept translations by National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI) or other officially recognised translators or by the HELI authorised agent network.

Conditional RPL/credit may be awarded based on uncertified supporting documentation, pending verification. This means:

- Students must submit certified versions of all documents within HELI's specified timeframes.
- Credit will only be formally awarded once certified documents are received and verified.
- Failure to provide certified documents within the required timeframes will result in the conditional credit being revoked.
- Claims that official documents are unavailable will not be accepted as grounds for deadline extensions.

All applications, including those with uncertified documents, must still be submitted by the standard application deadline.

HELI may verify AQF qualifications and providers through Australian government registers, such as Training.gov.au (TGA) and the TEQSA National Register.

Overseas qualifications may be assessed for equivalence in Australia at the time of application using the Country Education Profiles (CEP) online tool.

A successful application for one or more units will result in reduced tuition fees for the course under consideration. HELI will advise the student of the reduced tuition fees concurrent with notification of the outcome of the application for credit.

### **6.2.3 Credit for recommencing students**

Where a student recommences study with HELI (not including an approved leave of absence), any units from their previous enrolment which were completed with the Institute may be applied to their new enrolment, subject to a time limit of 10 years.

There will be no limit to the number of HELI completed unit credits that may be applied to the new enrolment.

Where a student has received RPL/credit from studies completed at other higher education institutions, these previously granted credits may be applied to their new enrolment, subject to a time limit of 10 years from the date of original completion.

In the event of a conflict between credit for HELI completed units and RPL/credit from another higher education provider, or an inability within the new enrolment to accommodate all credits available, the student must choose which credits to apply to their new enrolment. This decision is final once processed by the Registrar's office and no subsequent variation will be permitted.

### **6.2.4 International students applying for RPL**

For an international student applying for RPL/credit, the following apply:



- Where credit is granted before the issue of a visa, the actual course duration in the Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE) issued to the student will be reduced and noted in the Letter of Offer and Student Agreement; or
- 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, they must maintain a full-time study load as per their visa conditions.

International students will be provided with a written record of the decision in a *Letter of Offer* to enable the student to accept the offer of credit once their visa has been granted. The written record of acceptance will be retained as per the Student Records Management Policy.

### 6.2.5 Credit for learning from work experience

Credit may be granted for work experience where the 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.

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.

When assessing credit for work experience, the following will be accounted for:

- Authenticity - the applicant has demonstrated the learning outcomes that are being claimed;
- Currency - the applicant's capability as a result of the work experience is still valid and performable;
- Quality - the learning has reached the acceptable level;
- Relevance - the learning is applicable to the unit claimed;
- Transferability - the applicant's learning and capability can be applied outside the specific context in which it was learned;
- Comparability - the prior learning is comparable in content and standard with the unit(s) in which credit is sought.

### 6.2.6 RPL/credit limitations

Credit limitations governing appropriate and relevant credit apply to all HELI courses are reported in Appendix 1.

In exceptional circumstance, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), on the recommendation of the Course Coordinator, may grant credit for up to 67% of a course based on formal or informal prior learning.

As detailed in section 6.2.3, an exception to the 67% credit limit applies to returning HELI students seeking reinstatement in their original course after administrative cancellation (such as for non-enrolment or non-payment). These students may receive credit for all previously completed units in the same course at HELI.

Credit will not be granted for courses or units completed more than ten (10) years before the date of the credit application and will not be granted for work experience completed more than five (5) years before the credit application date.

### **6.2.7 Assessment of RPL/credit applications**

An application for credit based on prior learning must be made on the Heli *Application for Credit for Prior Learning*, preferably at the time of application for admission to a course. The application must be accompanied by documentary evidence sufficient to support the request for credit, as specified at Section 6.2.2 of this policy.

Assessment of the application will be undertaken by the Course Coordinator who will advise the Registrar by email of the outcome of the application within fifteen (15) working days of receiving the finalised *Application for Credit for Prior Learning*.

The Registrar will then notify the applicant in writing of the result of their application within twenty (20) working days of receiving the *Outcome of Application for Credit for Prior Learning*. 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* 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 Outcomes* by the Registrar.

### **6.2.8 Block credit**

Block credit is a form of credit granted towards whole stages or components of an officially accredited qualification or program of learning.

Block Credit is credit granted towards a component of a qualification and is determined by a body of knowledge attained through either a previous qualification at an appropriate AQF level or demonstrated skills and/or experience.

In accordance with the AQF Qualifications Pathways Policy, Block Credit may be granted on the basis of a formal articulation/credit agreement with other education providers where the applicant has completed a formal qualification at an appropriate AQF level. Guidelines for Articulation and Credit Transfer Agreements are set out in Section 6.1.4 of this policy. Such an agreement will specify the amount of credit the student is automatically granted at admission. The agreement allows the student exemption from completing some stages or components of a course. A Block Credit agreement does not stipulate that a student has achieved equivalent units, learning outcomes or content. When establishing a Block Credit Agreement, the mapping of desired learning outcomes will determine the units being granted credit, with consideration given to facilitating academic progression.

### **6.2.9 Recording of awarded credit**

Specified, unspecified or block credit awarded to a student towards studies with HELI will be recorded on the student's academic transcript and assigned the applicable grade as follows:

- Credit awarded through credit transfer, RPL or articulation will be assigned the grade of 'Recognition of Prior Learning';
- Block credit may be recorded as "Credit granted for ... units" under the course for which credit was awarded.

Credit awarded by HELI will not be given a mark and will not be included in the calculation of the Grade Point Average.

Credit awarded to an international student who is still to commence study with HELI will also be recorded in the Australian Government's international student management system (PRISMS) and on the CoE which is issued to the international student before the student visa is granted.

Credit awarded to an international student that has commenced studies with HELI will also be recorded in PRISMS as required under Section 19 of the ESOS Act 2000. Where the award of credit shortens the required duration of study for the course, HELI is required to adjust the international student's course completion date in PRISMS. This may affect the international student's visa entitlements.

The details of the outcomes of assessments of applications for RPL/credit will be recorded on the Register of Outcomes database.

## **7. Appeals**

A prospective or current student who is not satisfied with the outcome of a credit assessment may request a review of academic decision in accordance with HELI *Student Academic Grievances and Appeals Policy and Procedure*.

## **8. Responsibilities**

The Course Coordinator will consider the RPL/credit request in consultation with the relevant academic expert within five (5) working days of receiving the application and in consultation with the relevant academic staff:

- approve the application; or
- defer the application and request further information; or
- reject the application.

## **9. Related Documents**

- Admission Policy
- Award of Grades Policy
- Grievances and Appeals Policy and Procedure
- Letter of Offer and Student Agreement International
- Application for Credit for Prior Learning Application form
- Outcome of Application for CPL - domestic student
- Outcome of Application for CPL - international student

- Register of CPL Outcomes and Reviews

## 10. Related Legislation

- Tertiary Education Quality and Standards (TEQSA) Act 2011 (Cth)
- Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021
- Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act 2000 (Cth)
- Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)
- Education Services for Overseas Students Regulations 2001
- The National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 (The National Code)
- Higher Education Support Act 2003 (Cth)
- Recognition of Prior Learning: An Explanation (AQF, 2012)
- Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)

## 11. Version Control

<b>Document ID</b>	Award of Credit Policy
<b>Category</b>	Academic
<b>Document Owner</b>	Dean (Academic)
<b>Approved by</b>	Academic Board

Version	Summary of changes	Approval date	Next review date
1.0	Harmonised policy across ECA HE. This policy replaces the Credit for Prior Learning Policy and Procedure.	Academic Board: 16 December 2024	18 December 2026

### Appendix: Credit Limitations

The following table outlines the maximum credit that may be granted when a student enrolls in a new qualification at HELI, based on their previously completed qualifications at various AQF levels.

Note: In special circumstances, credit of up to 67% may be granted under Section 6.2.6 of this Policy.

Enrolled Course	Units / Courses from which credit may be approved
<b>Master Degrees (AQF 9)</b>	up to <b>50%</b> of the enrolled course for a completed Masters Degree (AQF 9)
	up to <b>50%</b> of the enrolled course for a completed Graduate Diploma (AQF 8)
	up to <b>33%</b> of the enrolled course for a completed Graduate Certificate (AQF 8)
	up to <b>25%</b> of the enrolled course for a completed Bachelor degree in a cognate discipline (AQF 7)
<b>Graduate Diploma (AQF 8)</b>	up to <b>50%</b> of the enrolled course for a completed Graduate Diploma (AQF 8)
	up to <b>50%</b> of the enrolled course for a completed Graduate Certificate (AQF 8)
<b>Graduate Certificate (AQF 8)</b>	up to <b>50%</b> of the enrolled course for a completed Graduate Certificate (AQF 8)
<b>Bachelor Degrees (AQF 7)</b>	up to <b>50%</b> of the enrolled course for a completed Bachelor Degree (AQF 7)
	up to <b>50%</b> of the enrolled course for a completed Associate Degree (AQF 6)
	up to <b>50%</b> of the enrolled course for a completed Advanced Diploma (AQF 6)
	up to <b>33%</b> of the enrolled course for a completed Diploma (AQF 5)
<b>Diploma (AQF 5)</b>	up to <b>50%</b> of the enrolled course for a completed Diploma (AQF 5)