

# Courses Lifecycle - Pathways Procedure

## Section 1 - Purpose / Objectives

(1) This Procedure establishes the purpose, structure and constraints within which Victoria University (VU) engages in developing, offering and managing pathways.

## Section 2 - Scope / Application

(2) This Procedure applies to pathways:

- a. within VU; and
- b. between VU and other higher education providers and vocational education and training providers, whether Australian or overseas providers, and whether public or private.

(3) This Procedure applies to all pathways including arrangements for any combination of guaranteed entry and advanced standing, excepting:

- a. Partnerships and agreements involving Dual or Joint Awards (see Dual and Joint Awards Procedure [pending]).
- b. The award of advanced standing / credit outside of an agreed pathway (see [Admissions - Advanced Standing Procedure \(HE\)](#)).

## Section 3 - Definitions

(4) Advanced Standing: The term 'advanced standing' is used to describe a form of credit for previous learning. It involves the application of credit towards a student's course of study, usually in respect of entering a course at an advanced stage.

(5) Block Credit: Granted toward whole stages or components of a qualification, block credit does not involve individual student assessment. It is typically arranged through a credit transfer or pathways agreement with another education provider. Block credit is given for a whole section of a course (e.g. a semester or a year of full-time study) rather than for specific units.

(6) Cognate: Refers to a prior qualification that is demonstrably within the discipline to the one for which a person seeks advanced standing.

(7) Credit: 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 achieve a qualification and may be through credit transfer, articulation, recognition of prior learning or advanced standing.

(8) Credit arrangements: formal negotiated arrangements within and between issuing organisations or accrediting authorities.

(9) Credit transfer: is a process that provides students with agreed and consistent credit outcomes for completed components of a course of study based on identified equivalence in content and learning outcomes between matched courses of study.

(10) Pathways: Formally agreed structures by which students may move through qualification levels and between courses with full or partial recognition for the qualifications and/or learning outcomes they already have.

(11) Recognition of Prior Learning: 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.

## Section 4 - Policy Statement

(12) See [Courses Lifecycle Policy](#).

## Section 5 - Procedures

### Part A - Roles and Responsibilities

Roles	Responsibilities
Pathway proponent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Provide expert advice on the proposed pathway.</li><li>- Perform preliminary feasibility assessment in conjunction with Manager Pathways and Partnerships.</li><li>- Develop the pathways proposal and business case in conjunction with the Manager Pathways and Partnerships.</li><li>- Complete all required forms and ensure they are properly submitted.</li></ul>
Manager Pathways and Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Perform preliminary feasibility assessment in conjunction with pathway proponent/s.</li><li>- Review and endorse the formal proposal and business case for the pathway.</li><li>- Work with all relevant Colleges and / or Victoria Polytechnic to develop internal pathway agreements.</li><li>- Endorse the Pathway Approval Form for external pathways.</li><li>- Ensure all Pathways, once approved, are advertised on the University's website.</li><li>- In conjunction with the Pathways Co-ordinator, conduct the annual review of the pathway's operation.</li><li>- If an agreement requires amendment at the approach of its expiration, re-negotiate a draft agreement for review by Legal Services.</li></ul>
Manager Admissions, Pathways and Scholarships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Provide expert advice on the proposed pathway.</li><li>- Advise on and participate in the creation of internal pathways .</li></ul>
Pathways Co-ordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- When the pathway is confirmed, ensure it is recorded and applied appropriately in the Admissions process and appropriately advertised.</li><li>- In conjunction with the Manager Pathways and Partnerships, conduct the annual review of the pathway's operation.</li></ul>
Deans of relevant Colleges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Approve and sign off internal pathways.</li><li>- Endorse the business case / pathway proposal for external pathways.</li><li>- Approve renewal of agreements that do not require amendment.</li></ul>
Academic Board, Courses Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Endorse the Pathways Approval Form for external pathways.</li><li>- Note new internal Pathways.</li></ul>
Vice-President International	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Approve and sign off external pathways with international partners following Courses Committee endorsement.</li></ul>
Provost	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Approve and sign off all external pathways following Courses Committee endorsement.</li></ul>

## Part B - Overview

(13) The University may enter into pathway arrangements both internally and with other educational institutions. Such arrangements may include agreement to provide students with advanced standing and/or guaranteed entry into a specified course.

(14) The University will maintain a register of both internal pathways arrangements and external pathway agreements that it has entered into, and will make relevant information publicly available as required by the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF).

(15) A pathway which includes credit arrangements must specify:

- a. the programs and courses between which credit is available;
- b. definitions of student eligibility for credit pursuant to the pathway; and
- c. the amount of credit and the nature of credit available pursuant to the pathway.

(16) Advanced Standing (credit) arrangements must meet general requirements as set out in the [Admissions - Advanced Standing Procedure \(HE\)](#).

## Part C - Internal Pathways

(17) Internal pathways may be created between courses at different AQF levels offered by any College within VU or Victoria Polytechnic.

(18) Internal pathways:

- a. Allow for the issuing of "packaged" offers to applicants, which involve an offer of a place in the first course and a conditional offer of a place in subsequent courses within the pathway (contingent on successful completion of the first course);
- b. Allow students who have completed a lower-level course within the pathway to transition seamlessly to a further qualification, whether or not they entered on a package arrangement;
- c. Allow students to access multiple exit points within the pathway according to their needs; and
- d. Allow the University to better plan its academic offerings.

(19) Internal pathways may specify:

- a. Guaranteed entry to nominated courses upon completion of earlier courses; and / or
- b. Specified credit arrangements for students entering via the pathway.

(20) Internal pathways, while they must be recorded, advertised, approved, reviewed, and monitored, do not require the signature of a formal agreement.

(21) The process for creating an internal pathway is as follows:

- a. Course pathways are identified from:
  - i. Victoria Polytechnic vocational education courses to Higher Education courses within VU; or
  - ii. One vocational education course to another; or
  - iii. One higher education course to another (eg sub-Bachelor course to Bachelor course).
- b. The Manager Pathways and Partnerships in collaboration with the Pathways Co-ordinator works with Victoria Polytechnic (if relevant) and all relevant Colleges to develop internal pathways and associated pathways

approval form/s.

- c. Once the internal pathway has been approved by the relevant VPoly Centre Director and College Director of Teaching and Learning, the Manager, Pathways and Partnerships will store the details of the pathway on the pathways Sharepoint site.
- d. Internal pathways approval forms are completed by relevant VPoly Education Manager and College Course Co-ordinator. These forms are then signed by the relevant College Director of Teaching and Learning and noted at Academic Board Courses Committee.
- e. The Pathways Co-ordinator then lodges internal pathways approval forms with relevant Course Management Officer (CAMS).

## **Part D - External Pathways**

(22) External Pathways require the signature of a formal agreement.

(23) Pathway agreements are contracts and bind both VU and its partners as per the specific terms of the agreement.

(24) Pathway agreements may exist:

- a. Between VU and one or more Australian education or training providers (in higher or vocational education).
- b. Between VU and one or more overseas education providers (in higher or vocational education).

(25) A pathway agreement may only be made between VU and an overseas tertiary institution which:

- a. is deemed by the Qualifications Recognition Policy Unit, Department of Education and Training, to offer the qualification for which VU will offer credit at a level equivalent to the corresponding AQF level qualification; or
- b. is recognised and accredited appropriately by the relevant institution's national education bodies.

(26) Pathway agreements may specify:

- a. Guaranteed entry to nominated VU courses; and / or
- b. Specified credit arrangements for students entering via the pathway.

(27) All pathway agreements are made in accordance with the University's Contracts Policy and authorised and signed in accordance with the University's schedules of delegations.

(28) All pathway arrangements must conform with the University's strategic objectives and result in clear benefits to the University and its enrolled students and graduates.

## **Part E - Preparing for a Pathway**

### **Proposal for pathway**

(29) If preliminary discussions indicate that a potential pathway may be viable, a pathway proposal should then be developed.

(30) When a new pathway involves a domestic external partner or provider with whom VU does not have an existing agreement, the following steps must be undertaken before the formal approval process commences:

- a. The external provider must complete all relevant forms and documentation; and
- b. A business case, incorporating a due diligence check, must be developed and approved by the relevant Dean, or nominee.

(31) When a new pathway involves an international external partner or provider with whom the university does not have an existing agreement, the following steps must be undertaken before the formal approval process commences:

- a. All prospective pathway initiatives with overseas providers must be discussed with VU College in the first instance.
- b. The external provider must complete all relevant forms and documentation;
- c. The proposal must be reviewed and endorsed by the Manager Pathways and Partnerships; and
- d. A business case, incorporating a due diligence check, must be developed and approved by the Vice President International and the Provost, or their delegates.

(32) Following approval of the business case, proposals follow the standard approval process outlined in Part G.

## **Part F - Business Cases and Due Diligence**

(33) A business case must be prepared for every proposed pathway that will be subject to an agreement.

(34) Business cases must be prepared using the Business Case for Pathway Development template.

(35) Business cases must include:

- a. Due diligence checks on proposed partner institutions (nature and scope of the check to be appropriate to the situation).
- b. Educational justification for the pathway.
- c. Estimated student and course load implications of the pathway.
- d. Calculations demonstrating the expected financial return of the pathway.
- e. The intended validity period (length) of the pathway.
- f. Any other matter that is relevant to making a determination about the value of the pathway.

(36) Business cases must be approved by the appropriate person or persons before a pathway is submitted to the course approval process.

## **Part G - Approvals and endorsements**

(37) Once a pathway's business case has been approved, all pathways must be proposed using the Pathway Approval form, detailing Guaranteed Entry and/or Advanced Standing.

(38) For external pathways, the relevant Director of Learning and Teaching's endorsement, and the relevant Dean's approval, is required before submission to CAMS and Courses Committee.

(39) External pathways are then presented to the Courses Committee of Academic Board for endorsement.

(40) The external pathway is approved by the Provost, on the recommendation of the Courses Committee.

(41) The Schedule to the Pathway agreement, which details expected course load outcomes from pathways, is approved by the Dean of the relevant College/s.

(42) The Pathway agreement is signed by the Provost and, in the case of international partners, the Principal Executive Officer for the purposes of ESOS compliance (currently Vice President International).

(43) The Pathway agreement is then signed by the partner/s.

## Part H - Notifications and Information about Pathways

(44) The Manager Pathways and Partnerships must communicate the full details of the conditions, nature and amount of credit to those on the notification list of the Pathways Approval Form within 7 working days of the pathway's approval.

(45) Where international students may be enrolled in a pathway, the TNE program manager must be notified (whether or not the pathway involves an international partner).

(46) All approved External Pathways Approval forms should be submitted to the relevant Course Management Officer to be uploaded to CAMS.

(47) In order to ensure that pathways are publicly available to existing and intending students, the Manager Pathways and Partnerships and the Pathways Co-ordinator will be responsible for ensuring that all pathway arrangements are published on the University website.

(48) In the case of international pathway agreements:

- a. Victoria University International advises all stakeholders of the approved agreement and sends a formal communication as required by the overseas provider.
- b. All students given guaranteed entry to, and advanced standing in, a course of the University must be informed of the English language requirements of the particular course.
- c. All students entering the University by a pathway agreement accept, in writing, the advanced standing granted, as mandated in ESOS requirements.

## Part I - University Validation and Annual Review

(49) The Pathways Co-ordinator will conduct an internal post-census check-up on all pathways to indicate enrolment numbers and evaluate the success of admissions, recruitment and marketing associated with the pathway. Results of this validation check are reported to all key stakeholders.

(50) All Pathways are reviewed as part of the Annual Course Monitoring process. [See [Courses Lifecycle - Annual Monitoring of Courses Procedure](#).]

(51) Every 12 months, a review is performed by the Manager Pathways and Partnerships, in conjunction with the Pathways Co-ordinator, of the operation of the pathway, including enrolments, discontinuations, changes to delivery, marketing, and new opportunities. This review results in recommendations for any changes needed to the pathway's marketing, administration or operation.

## Part J - Reviewing, Re-Accrediting and Terminating Pathways

(52) Before the term of a pathway and any associated schedule of agreement has expired, or if any course in the pathway is discontinued or redesigned to be offered at a different AQF or equivalent level, the pathway and the agreement will be reviewed by the Manager Pathways and Partnerships:

- a. to ensure that the contents remain current; and
- b. to ensure the pathway remains aligned with VU's strategic objectives and current standards as approved by Council.

(53) If the schedule does not require amendment, it may be submitted to the relevant Dean for renewal. Schedules of agreements with international providers also require the re-approval of the Vice President International and the Provost.

(54) If the relevant Dean decides the schedule should be amended or re-negotiated, he or she will refer it to the Manager Pathways and Partnerships, who will re-negotiate a draft schedule for review by Legal Services. Where the schedule involves on or offshore international pathways, Victoria University International should also be engaged in this process.

(55) If VU decides not to continue with a pathway, it will advise the other provider in writing that the agreement will not continue beyond the period of the existing schedule.

(56) In cases where VU has serious concerns about the quality of the other provider's program, VU may place the provider on notice that the agreement will not continue for the full term.

(57) Where a pathway is disestablished in advance of the agreement's expiry date, VU must:

- a. Ensure appropriate advice, support and transition arrangements are put in place for newly enrolled students and pending students who have been made offers of admission;
- b. Ensure that prospective students are quickly advised of the disestablishment of the pathway; and
- c. Ensure that students are not disadvantaged and can be provided for in accordance with the [Courses Lifecycle - Course Cessation and Student Transition Procedure](#).

## Status and Details

<b>Status</b>	Historic
<b>Effective Date</b>	10th January 2017
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