

# Credit - Pathways Procedure

## Section 1 - Summary

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

## Section 2 - HESF/ASQA/ESOS Alignment

(2) HESF: Standard 1.2 Credit and Recognition of Prior Learning

(3) [Standards for Registered Training Organisations \(RTOs\) 2015 \(Cth\)](#): Standard 3

(4) ESOS Act - National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018: Standard 2 Recruitment of an Overseas Student

## Section 3 - Scope

(5) 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.

(6) 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 (refer to [Courses Lifecycle - Dual and Joint Awards Procedure](#)).
- b. The award of advanced standing / credit outside of an agreed pathway (refer to [Credit - Academic Credit Procedure \(HE\)](#)).

## Section 4 - Definitions

(7) Advanced Standing

(8) Block Credit

(9) Cognate

(10) Credit

(11) Credit Arrangements

- (12) Credit Transfer
- (13) Pathways
- (14) Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)
- (15) Domestic Pathway
- (16) International Pathway
- (17) Internal Pathway
- (18) External Pathway

## Section 5 - Policy/Regulation

- (19) [Credit Policy](#)

## Section 6 - 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> </ul>
Manager, Pathways and Partnerships	<p>For all Domestic Pathways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Perform preliminary feasibility assessment in conjunction with pathway proponent/s.</li> <li>- Work with relevant TAFE Colleges/Centres to develop internal pathway agreements.</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 all Pathways' operations.</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>- Prepare Pathways Approval Forms for domestic internal and external pathways.</li> <li>- In conjunction with the Manager, Pathways and Partnerships, conduct the annual review of all Pathway's operations.</li> <li>- Update the Pathway in the Student Management System.</li> </ul>
Executive Deans of relevant Colleges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Approve and sign internal pathway agreements.</li> <li>- Endorse the business case / pathway proposal for external pathways for Courses Committee endorsement.</li> <li>- Approve renewal of agreements that do not require amendment.</li> <li>- Approve and sign agreement schedules outlining marketing and recruitment activities.</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>

Partnerships and Innovation	<p>For all International Pathways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Perform preliminary feasibility assessment in conjunction with pathway proponent/s.</li> <li>- Work with relevant TAFE Colleges/Centres to develop internal pathway agreements.</li> <li>- Conduct the annual review of all international pathway's operations.</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>
Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Chief Academic Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Approve and sign off all International Institutional Pathways Agreements.</li> <li>- Approve and sign all external pathway agreements following Courses Committee endorsement.</li> <li>- Approve and sign all domestic institutional Pathway Agreements.</li> </ul>

## Part B - Overview

(20) 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.

(21) 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 publically available as required by the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF).

(22) 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.

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

## Part C - Internal Pathways

(24) Internal pathways may be created between courses at different AQF levels offered by any TAFE Colleges/Centre.

(25) 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 course/s 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.

(26) 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.

(27) Internal pathways, while they must be recorded, advertised, approved, reviewed, and monitored, do not require

the signature of a formal agreement.

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

- a. Course pathways are identified from:
  - i. Vocational Education and Training courses to Higher Education courses within VU; or
  - ii. One Vocational Education and Training course to another; or
  - iii. One Higher Education course to another (e.g. sub-Bachelor course to Bachelor course).
  - iv. Non Award Foundation Programs to Higher Education courses.
- b. The Manager, Pathways and Partnerships in collaboration with the Pathways Co-ordinator works with TAFE (if relevant) and all relevant Colleges to develop internal pathways and associated pathways approval form/s.

(29) Internal pathway approval forms are completed by the Pathways Co-ordinator. These forms are then signed by the relevant College Director of Learning and Teaching and noted at Academic Board Courses Committee. Upon noting, the relevant Academic and Quality Standards Officer uploads the Pathway Approval Forms into CAMS.

## Part D - External Pathways

(30) External pathways require the signature on a formal agreement.

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

(32) Pathway agreements may exist:

- a. Between VU and one or more Australian education or training providers (in Higher Education or Vocational Education and Training).
- b. Between VU and one or more overseas education providers (in Higher Education or Vocational Education and Training).

(33) 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](#), 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.

(34) Pathway agreements may specify:

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

(35) 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.

(36) 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

(37) If preliminary discussions indicate that a potential pathway may be viable, a pathway proposal should be

developed.

## **Domestic Pathway**

(38) 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. A business case, incorporating a due diligence check, must be developed by the Managers, Pathways and Partnerships and approved by the relevant Executive Dean, or nominee.

## **International Pathway**

(39) 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 Partnerships and Innovation and the relevant Executive Dean in the first instance.
- b. A business case, incorporating a due diligence check, must be developed and approved by the Executive Director, Partnerships and Innovation, or their delegates.

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

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

(41) A [business case](#) must be prepared for every proposed pathway that will be subject to an agreement.

(42) 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.

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

(44) Details of the business case and due diligence findings should be recorded in the Strategic Rationale section of the Pathways Approval Form for external pathways.

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

(45) Once a business case has been approved for a Pathway, the Pathway Approval form must be completed, detailing Guaranteed Entry and/or Credit arrangements.

### **Internal Pathways**

(46) For internal pathways, the relevant Director/s of Learning and Teaching must sign the Pathway Approval Form before submitting to the Courses Committee of the Academic Board for noting.

(47) VET to VET pathways are approved by the designated officer as detailed in the [Credit Policy](#) and are submitted to the Courses Committee of the Academic Board for noting.

## **External Pathways**

(48) For external pathways, the relevant Director of Learning and Teaching must endorse the Pathway, the relevant Executive Dean must approve the Pathway, and for international pathway agreements, the Executive Director Partnerships and Innovation must endorse the Pathway, before submission to Courses Committee of the Academic Board.

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

(50) The external pathway is approved by the Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Chief Academic Officer, on the recommendation of the Courses Committee of the Academic Board.

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

(52) The Pathway agreement is signed by the Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Chief Academic Officer.

(53) The Pathway agreement is forwarded to the external partner/s for signing.

(54) Copies of agreements, schedules and pathway approval forms should be shared with partners with copies stored in the University legal filing system (refer to [Contract Best Practice Guidelines](#)).

## **Part H - Notifications and Information about Pathways**

(55) For domestic pathways arrangements, 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 Pathway Approval Form within 7 working days of the Pathway being approved.

(56) For international pathway arrangements, Partnerships and Innovation must notify the international partner and the Manager, Pathways and Partnerships must communicate the full details of the conditions, nature and amount of credit to the remainder of those on the notification list of the Pathway Approval Form within 7 working days of the Pathway being approved.

(57) The relevant Course Management Officer will upload all approved Internal and External Pathway Approval Forms into CAMS.

(58) 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.

(59) In the case of international pathway agreements:

- a. Partnerships and Innovation will advise all stakeholders of the approved agreement and send 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

(60) Quality, Information and Planning (QIP) will conduct an internal post-census check 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.

(61) All Pathway agreements and student outcomes are reviewed as part of the Annual Course Monitoring process (refer to [Courses Lifecycle - Annual Course Monitoring \(HE\) Procedure](#)).

(62) Every 12 months, a review of all domestic pathway agreements 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 marketing, administration or operation of the Pathway agreement.

(63) Every 12 months, a review of all international pathway agreements is performed by Partnerships and Innovation, in conjunction with the relevant Director(s) of Learning and Teaching, 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 marketing, administration or operation of the Pathway agreement.

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

(64) Before the term of a domestic 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 content remain current; and
- b. to ensure the pathway remains aligned with VU's strategic objectives and current standards as approved by Council.

(65) Before the term of an international 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 Partnerships and Innovation:

- 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.

(66) If the schedule does not require amendment, it may be submitted to the relevant Executive Dean for renewal.

(67) If the relevant Executive Dean decides the domestic pathway schedule should be amended or re-negotiated, they 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 onshore or offshore international pathway agreements, they will refer to Partnerships and Innovation who will re-negotiate a draft schedule for review by Legal Services.

(68) 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.

(69) 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.

(70) 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 \(HE\) Procedure](#).



## Status and Details

<b>Status</b>	Current
<b>Effective Date</b>	20th June 2017
<b>Review Date</b>	20th June 2020
<b>Approval Authority</b>	Pro Vice Chancellor Learning Innovation & Quality
<b>Approval Date</b>	7th June 2017
<b>Expiry Date</b>	Not Applicable
<b>Accountable Officer</b>	John Germov Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Chief Academic Officer +613 99195077
<b>Responsible Officer</b>	Deborah Tyler Director, Academic Quality and Standards +613 9919 4310
<b>Enquiries Contact</b>	Deborah Tyler Director, Academic Quality and Standards +613 9919 4310

## Glossary Terms and Definitions

**"Advanced Standing"** - Refer to Credit definition. Advanced Standing term is being phased out and referred to as Credit.

**"Block Credit"** - Granted toward whole stages or components of a qualification, block credits given for a whole section of a course (e.g. a semester or a year of full-time study) rather than for specific units.

**"Cognate"** - Refers to a prior qualification that is demonstrably within the discipline to the one for which a person seeks advanced standing.

**"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 time required to achieve a qualification and may be through credit transfer, recognition of prior learning or academic credit.

**"Credit Arrangements"** - Formal negotiated arrangements within and between issuing organisations or accrediting authorities.

**"Credit Transfer"** - is a process that provides students with agreed and consistent credit outcomes for completed components of a course of study. This may be based on identified equivalence in content and learning outcomes between matched courses of study, or the completion of units of competency or skillsets evidenced by AQF certification documentation or authenticated VET transcripts.

**"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 achieved.

**"Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)"** - 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.

**"Domestic Pathway"** - Pathways delivered in Australia and related to students who are Australian Citizens or Permanent Residents. Domestic pathways can be internal or external pathways.

**"International Pathway"** - Pathways delivered in Australia (and/or) overseas and related to students who are or will be on an international student visa. International pathways can be internal or external pathways.

**"Internal Pathway"** - Internal pathways may be created between courses at different Australian Qualification Framework levels offered by any College within Victoria University (VU) or TAFE. Internal pathways are available to Domestic or International students.

**"External Pathway"** - Arrangements between Victoria University (VU) and one or more Australian education and training providers or one or more overseas education providers. External pathways are available to Domestic and/or International students.