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 - Scope

(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 (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)).

(4) VE to VE Pathways as recognised by National Training Packages are outside the scope of this Procedure.

Section 3 - Policy/Regulation

(5) Credit Policy

Section 4 - Procedures

Part A - Roles and Responsibilities

Roles	Responsibilities
Pathway proponent	Provides expert advice on the proposed pathway. Performs preliminary feasibility assessment in conjunction with the Pathways and Partnerships Coordinator.
Manager, Admissions, Pathways and Credit	When the pathway is confirmed, ensures it is recorded and applied appropriately in the Admissions process and appropriately advertised. Supports the Pathways and Partnerships Coordinator with the annual review of all Pathways' operations.

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Pathways and Partnerships Coordinator	Provides expert advice and works with relevant Colleges, external partners and potential partners to identify, develop internal pathways. Provides advice and prepares Business Case for external onshore pathways. If an agreement with a domestic partner requires changes, re-negotiates a draft agreement/revised schedule for review by the Office of the General Counsel. Prepares Pathways Approval Forms for domestic internal and external pathways. Ensures all Pathways, once approved, are advertised on the University's website. Oversees and consolidates data for the annual review of all Pathway operations. Updates the Pathway in the Student Management System. In collaboration with AQS, uploads the Pathways Approval Form into CAMS.
VU Global	For all International Pathways: - Performs preliminary feasibility assessment in conjunction with pathway proponent/s. - Works with relevant Colleges and/or TAFE to develop internal pathway agreements. - Conducts the annual review of all international pathway's operations. If an agreement requires amendment at the approach of its expiration, re-negotiates a draft agreement for review by the Office of the General Counsel.
Academic Quality and Standards (AQS)	Conducts a post-census internal validation check.
Academic Board Courses Committee	Endorses the Pathways Approval Form for external pathways. Notes new internal pathways.
Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Chief Academic Officer (SDVCCAO)	Approves and signs off all International Institutional Pathways Agreements and associated business cases. Approves and signs all business cases for domestic institutional Pathway Agreements. Approves and signs all external pathway agreements following Courses Committee endorsement

Part B - Overview

(6) 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.

(7) 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).

(8) 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.

(9) Advanced Standing (credit) arrangements must meet general requirements as set out in the Credit - Academic Credit Procedure (HE).

Part C - Internal Pathways

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

(11) 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.

(12) 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.

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

(14) 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 Higher Education course to another (e.g. sub-Bachelor course to Bachelor course); or,
    iii. Non Award Foundation Programs to Higher Education courses.
b. The Pathways and Partnerships Coordinator works with TAFE (if relevant) and all relevant Colleges to develop internal pathways and associated pathways approval form/s. The Manager, Admissions, Pathways and Credit and VU Global will be consulted where appropriate.

(15) Internal pathway approval forms are completed by the Pathways and Parterships Coordinator. These forms are then signed by the relevant College Associate Dean Learning and Teaching or equivalent, and noted at Academic Board Courses Committee. Upon noting, the Pathway Approval Form is uploaded into CAMS.

Part D - External Pathways

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

(17) 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).

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

a. is deemed by the National Information Centre for qualifications, Qualifications Recognition Policy Unit,

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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.

(19) Pathway agreements may specify:

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

(20) 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.

(21) 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

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

Domestic Pathway

(23) 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 Pathways and Partnerships Coordinator and approved by the relevant Executive Dean/Executive Director, or nominee.

International Pathway Partnerships

(24) 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/Executive Director in the first instance.
b. A business case, incorporating a due diligence check, must be developed and approved by the Chief International Officer or their delegates.

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

Part F - Business Cases and Due Diligence

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

(27) 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.

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

(29) 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

(30) 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

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

External Pathways

(32) For external pathways, the relevant Associate Dean of Learning and Teaching must endorse the Pathway, the relevant Executive Dean must approve the Pathway, and for international pathway agreements, the Chief International Officer must endorse the Pathway before submission to Courses Committee of the Academic Board.

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

(34) 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.

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

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

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

(38) 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

(39) For domestic pathways arrangements, the Pathways and Partnerships Coordinator 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.

(40) For international pathway arrangements, VU Global must notify the international partner and the Manager, Admissions, Pathways and Credit regarding 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.

(41) The relevant Course Management Officer will upload all approved Internal and External Pathway Approval Forms

into CAMS.

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

(43) In the case of international pathway agreements:

a. VU Global 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

(44) AQS 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.

(45) 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).

(46) Every 12 months, a review of all domestic pathway agreements is performed by the Pathways and Partnerships Coordinator in collaboration with all key stakeholders. The review will consider the operation of the pathways, including enrolments, discontinuations, changes to delivery, marketing, and new opportunities. This report will recommend any changes needed to the marketing, administration or the operation of the Pathway agreements and is submitted to the Academic Board for consideration and adoption.

(47) Every 12 months, a review of all international pathway agreements is performed by VU Global, in conjunction with the relevant Associate Dean(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

(48) 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 Pathways and Partnerships Coordinator to ensure that:

a. the content remains current; and
b. the pathway remains aligned with VU's strategic objectives and current standards as approved by Council.

(49) 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 oered at a dierent AQF or equivalent level, the pathway and the agreement will be reviewed by VU Global to ensure that:

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

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

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(51) If the relevant Executive Dean decides the domestic pathway schedule should be amended or re-negotiated, they will refer it to the Pathways and Partnerships Coordinator, who will re-negotiate a draft schedule for review by the Office of the General Counsel. Where the schedule involves onshore or offshore international pathway agreements, they will refer to VU Global who will re-negotiate a draft schedule for review by the Office of the General Counsel.

(52) 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.

(53) 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.

(54) 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.

Section 5 - HESF/ASQA/ESOS Alignment

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

(56) Outcome Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations 2025: Standard 2.1 & 2.2 Information; 4.4 Continuous Improvement. Compliance Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations and FPP Requirements 2025: Standard 14 Transition of training products.

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

Section 6 - Definitions

(58) Advanced Standing

(59) Cognate

(60) Credit

(61) Credit Arrangements

(62) Credit Transfer

(63) Domestic Pathway

(64) International Pathway

(65) Internal Pathway

(66) External Pathway

(67) Pathways

(68) Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

(69) Specified Credit

(70) Unspecified Credit

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	7th October 2025
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Glossary Terms and Definitions

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

"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 and non-formal learning and/or work experience) 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.

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"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.

"Specified Credit" - Specified credit is granted for one or more specific units in a course, exempting students from those units and awarding the appropriate credit points in their place. Specified credit may be granted where the applicant has met the learning outcomes, attained the knowledge and/or developed the skills related to a specific unit. The result for that unit is not transferred and credit only is indicated on the academic transcript.

"Unspecified Credit" - Credit granted towards components of a qualification or program of learning, such as minor studies where options exists or where block credit is applied, but the credit is not applied against a specific unit/s.

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