

# Admissions - Advanced Standing Procedure (HE)

## Section 1 - Purpose / Objectives

(1) This procedure provides a framework for assessing and granting advanced standing for higher education courses at Victoria University.

## Section 2 - Scope / Application

(2) This procedure applies to:

- a. Individual applications for advanced standing made for all higher education courses and coursework components of higher degrees by research, offered by Victoria University (VU).
- b. Block credit granted as part of pathway or package arrangements both internally within VU, and with external partners.
- c. Applications from both domestic and international students, whether onshore or offshore.

(3) This procedure does not apply to:

- a. Applications for recognition of prior learning (RPL) for vocational education courses. For advice on RPL in vocational education, please see the [TAFE Recognition of Prior Learning and Credit Transfer Procedure](#).

## 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) Articulation: A method of progression from one completed qualification to another with guaranteed admission and/or credit in a defined pathway.

(6) 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.

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

(8) 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.

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

(10) 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.

(11) 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.

(12) 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.

(13) Specified credit is credit granted towards particular or specific components of a qualification or program of learning, such as a core or required major, or particular units.

(14) Unspecified credit is credit granted towards optional components of a qualification or program of learning, such as elective minor studies.

## Section 4 - Policy Statement

(15) See part 23 of [Admissions Policy](#).

## Section 5 - Procedures

### Part A - Roles and Responsibilities\*

Roles	Responsibilities
Student Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Receive and manage applications for advanced standing (for domestic students) and manage applications for advanced standing for international students</li><li>- Where applications relate to existing pathway agreements or prior VU units, process the application in full</li><li>- Where applications relate to non-pathway, non-VU studies for which there is no existing precedent, refer the application to the Course Co-ordinator for assessment</li><li>- Notify applicants of the outcome of their applications</li><li>- Maintain a record of past decisions to create a precedent database for advanced standing assessments</li><li>- Ensure that information about advanced standing, the processes required, and the evidence sought, is provided to potential applicants</li></ul>
VU International	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Receive applications for advanced standing for international students</li><li>- Pass the application to Student Services for processing</li><li>- Notify applicants of the outcome of their applications</li></ul>
Course Co-ordinators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Assess applications for advanced standing that are not made under a pathway agreement, do not relate to previous VU studies, and for which there is no established precedent</li><li>- Assess all applications for recognition of prior learning (RPL) for work-based learning for which credit is sought</li></ul>
Deans (or nominees)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Evaluate and approve or deny applications for credit for studies undertaken elsewhere concurrently with VU studies</li></ul>

## Part B - Relationship to the Australian Qualifications Framework

(16) The Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2015 and the [Australian Qualifications Framework \(AQF\) Pathways Policy](#) apply to the assessment of higher education advanced standing at VU and form the basis of the rules below.

(17) Advanced standing is subject to the conditions of professional accreditation bodies, where these exist. For professionally accredited courses (e.g. Law, Nursing) advanced standing can only be given for units that are considered to be equivalent in a course at another accredited institution.

## Part C - General rules for advanced standing

(18) Applications for advanced standing may be made:

- a. at the time of an application for admission, or
- b. after a person has been admitted, enrolled and become a student of the University, but prior to enrolment in the units of study for which advanced standing is sought.

(19) Advanced standing takes into account the comparability and equivalence of:

- a. Learning outcomes
- b. Volume of learning
- c. Content of study
- d. AQF level completed

(20) Decisions regarding advanced standing applications will be:

- a. timely;
- b. evidence-based and transparent;
- c. fair and consistent;
- d. academically defensible; and
- e. mindful of the student's ability to successfully meet the learning outcomes of the course.

(21) Limitations apply to the application of advanced standing to VU courses:

- a. for a Bachelor's degree, a student must complete at least 96 credit points of the course at VU;
- b. at least 50 per cent of the credit points required to gain an Honours award must be achieved through formal study at the University;
- c. for postgraduate coursework awards a student must complete at least 50% of the course at VU;
- d. advanced standing is offered for final year units in undergraduate degrees only where these do not form a core requirement of the degree; and
- e. advanced standing is not offered for capstone units or thesis components of any course.

(22) Advanced Standing may be granted on the basis of:

- a. formal pathways or credit agreements within VU;
- b. formal pathways or credit agreements between VU and another institution; or
- c. an application by an individual student.

(23) Advanced standing is only available for learning that is deemed current; that is:

- a. less than five years prior to the application; or
- b. within a shorter time frame, as set by the Course Coordinator and approved by the Dean of College (or nominee) in order to meet professional registration requirements.

(24) Eligibility for advanced standing is not affected by:

- a. the location at which the destination course is taught.
- b. the grades received in a unit, providing a pass grade has been achieved. A conceded pass does not constitute a pass for this purpose.

(25) Eligibility for advanced standing does not mean that a student is entitled to, or must be offered, a place in the course.

(26) Where completion of studies or a previous course is a prerequisite for admission to a course, these prerequisite studies may not be used to also claim advanced standing.

## **Part D - Credit transfer**

(27) Credit Transfers may take place:

- a. as part of a Pathways Agreement; or
- b. between courses where the same units are available for credit.

(28) Credit transfer associated with enrolment in a unit or course outside of VU whilst concurrently enrolled at VU is only possible where either:

- a. there is an existing cross-institutional agreement for credit sharing; or
- b. written permission is provided by the Dean or nominee to the individual student prior to an application being made.

## **Part E - Process for assessment of advanced standing based on prior studies**

(29) Approved applications for advanced standing made more than 24 months ahead of enrolment in a course will result in a conditional offer of credit. Conditional offers are reviewed prior to enrolment.

(30) Applicants must complete the Advanced Standing (Higher Education) Application Form and submit by the advertised due dates with full supporting evidence.

(31) Applications for advanced standing must be accompanied by:

- a. A certified copy of the academic transcript (not required for evidence of completion in VU courses); and
- b. where the application does not relate to a formal pathway or credit agreement between the relevant institutions, unit guides or equivalent, showing learning outcomes and assessment activities.

(32) All supporting documentation must be in English. Documents in a language other than English must be accompanied by certified translations.

### **For international students:**

(33) Applications for advanced standing for International students should be lodged with Victoria University

International at the time of applying for admission to the University.

(34) Victoria University International pass these applications to Student Services for processing and advise applicants of the outcome of this process.

(35) Normally, applicants will be informed of the amount of advanced standing granted in their letter of offer for course admission. However, in some cases:

- a. the assessment process may take longer than the period necessary to send the offer of admission.
- b. the applicant may be required to provide further evidence or undertake an additional assessment, in which case the University will contact the applicant directly.

## **All students**

(36) Following receipt of an application for admission with advanced standing, the responsible team within Student Services will take the following actions:

- a. if the application relates to a formal pathway agreement, process it as granted;
- b. if the application relates to VU units with the same unit codes as those in the destination course, those deemed equivalent or as replacement units, process application as granted;
- c. if the application relates to units or courses for which there is an agreed precedent, process the application according to the precedent;
- d. if the application relates to units or courses completed outside of agreed precedents but not captured within a pathway or package agreement, refer the application to the relevant Course Co-ordinator;
- e. if the application relates to a request for recognition of prior learning, refer the application to the Course Co-ordinator (see Part F).
- f. Note: If the application relates to TNE delivery, the relevant Site Coordinator will be the key contact point.

## **Part F - College process for recognition of prior learning (RPL)**

(37) This process relates to applications for credit based on work experience rather than prior study, and is the responsibility of the relevant Course Co-ordinator.

(38) The applicant may be required to supply certified copies of statements from employers, present a portfolio, attend an interview or demonstrate their competence through an appropriate form of assessment.

(39) Applicants may be invited to attend an interview to discuss their application. Such interviews may be conducted in person or by other means, as arranged by the College.

(40) Equivalence is assessed in terms of level, student load and the function of the unit. Functions include:

- a. achieving particular learning outcomes
- b. provision of skills and knowledge that are pre-requisites for later units, or
- c. the requirements of a professional body.

(41) Once an assessment of RPL has been made, the application will be referred with outcome to the relevant Student Services team for notification in accordance with clause 41.

## **Part G - Notification, Review and Appeal**

(42) Applicants will be notified within 15 University business days of:

- a. the outcome,
- b. the amount of credit granted,
- c. any further steps they need to take, and
- d. appeal options.

(43) Where the application relates to advanced standing under a formal pathway agreement or claimed from previous equivalent VU units, the University will endeavour to notify applicants within 5 business days.

(44) Applicants whose application for advanced standing is denied may seek review as outlined in the [Admissions Policy](#).

## **Section 6 - Related policies, procedures and guidelines**

(45) [Admissions Policy](#)

(46) [Principles of Equivalence Policy](#)

(47) [Assessment for Learning Policy](#)

(48) [Courses Lifecycle - Pathways Procedure](#)

(49) Dual and Joint Awards Procedure [pending]

(50) Criteria for Assessing Cognates Guideline [pending]

(51) Assessing Work-based Learning for Credit Guideline [pending]

## Status and Details

<b>Status</b>	Historic
<b>Effective Date</b>	6th September 2016
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