Credit - Academic Credit Procedure (HE)

Section 1 - Summary

(1) This Procedure provides a framework for assessing and granting academic credit for higher education courses at Victoria University (VU).

Section 2 - Scope

(2) This Procedure applies to:

a. Individual applications for academic credit 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 Credit - VET Skills Recognition Procedure.

Section 3 - Policy/Regulation

(4) Credit Policy

Section 4 - Procedures

Part A - Summary of Roles and Responsibilities

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Roles	Responsibilities
Student Administration (Admissions, Pathways and Credit)	- Manage applications for academic credit for domestic and international students. - Verify applications for credit comply with Credit Policy requirements. - Apply approved and valid precedents. - Apply credit relating to existing pathway agreements or prior VU units. - Refer applications for non-pathway, non-VU studies for which there is no existing precedent, to the Course Chair/s for assessment - Notify applicants of the outcome of their credit application in writing. - Request and record current international students acceptance of credit. - Manage and maintain the approval process for new precedents and maintenance of precedents. - Ensure that clear information about the academic credit process is available to current and future students. - Maintain the Credit Calculator. - Process Credit on the student record. - Provide reports on credit application outcomes and precedents.
Student Administration (Admissions, Enrolments and Graduations)	- Update the student enrolment as per the credit granted. - Report any changes in course duration in PRISMS for credit granted for enrolled international students.
VU Global	- Receive applications for credit for international applicants (pre-acceptance). - View approved precedents and provide credit estimates to international applicants and agents. - Move the credit applications to Student Administration. - Notify applicants of the outcome of their applications via the Letter of Offer and maintain a record of the applicant’s acceptance.
Course Chair	- Verify assessment of credit accords with Credit Policy settings. - Assess applications for credit for which there is no established precedent. - Assess applications for recognition of prior learning (RPL) for informal or non-formal learning. - Review precedents every five years or on expiry.
Advisory and VUHQ	- Advise students on the progress of credit applications.
Program Head	- Approve or deny applications for credit for studies undertaken elsewhere concurrently with VU studies. - Provide final approval of precedents recommended by Course Chairs. - Approve a credit decision as a precedent where applicable and refer to the Executive Dean for approval.
Director, Academic Quality and Standards	- Provide advice on the interpretation and implementation of procedures related to the Credit Policy. - Monitor the outcomes of credit policy and procedures and related quality assurance outcomes.

Part B - General Rules for Academic Credit

(5) Applications for academic credit 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 Academic credit is sought.

(6) Academic credit takes into account the comparability and equivalence of:

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

(7) Decisions regarding Academic credit 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.

(8) Limitations apply to the application of Academic credit to VU courses:

a. For a Bachelor degree, a student must complete at least 96 credit points of the course at VU;
b. Where a student already holds a Bachelor degree in a similar field of study, a student must complete at least 96 credit points of the related Bachelor degree to gain the award.
c. At least 50 per cent of the credit points required to gain a one-year honours, or sub-bachelor award must be achieved through formal study at VU.
d. For postgraduate coursework awards a student must complete at least 50% of the course at VU in the relevant Award.
e. For a double qualification, comprising two different AQF levels, the amount of credit points to be completed must comply with the completion requirements as outlined for each qualification.
f. Credit is not available for final year core units in undergraduate degrees.
g. Credit is not available for capstone units or thesis components of any course.
h. Credit is not available for enabling or bridging courses.

(9) With the exception of nested postgraduate awards, credit that has been applied to a conferred award cannot be re-applied to a further course.

(10) Where a Bachelor degree in a similar discipline has been completed, a student must complete at least 96 credit points of the related Bachelor degree to gain the award.

(11) Academic credit may be granted on the basis of:

a. Formal pathways or credit agreements within VU or between VU and another institution; or
b. An application by an individual student.
c. Completion of an award at AQF 7 or above in the same or similar discipline approved in the admission requirements that forms part of a nested postgraduate award within a Master by coursework.

(12) Credit will be granted for microcredential stacks in instances where the volume of learning and units learning outcomes are equivalent (refer to Clause 11 of the Micro-credentials Procedure).

(13) Academic credit is only available for learning that is deemed current; that is:

a. Within 10 years; or
b. Within a shorter time frame, as set by the Course Chair and approved by the Executive Dean (or nominee) in order to meet professional registration requirements; or
c. Where the applicant can demonstrate the currency of their learning through current registration and practice in a regulated profession.

(14) Eligibility for Academic credit 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.

(15) Eligibility for Academic credit does not mean that a student is entitled to, or must be offered, a place in the course.

(16) 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 Academic credit.

Part C - Concurrent Enrolment

(17) 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; or
b. Written permission is provided by the Executive Dean or nominee to the individual student prior to an application being made.

(18) Any credit granted under cross-institutional enrolment must be approved as part of the cross-institutional admissions process.

Part D - Applying for Academic Credit

(19) Applications for academic credit 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.

(20) Applicants must complete the Academic Credit (Higher Education) Application via the application portal either at the time of applying for a course or after they have been accepted to the course via My VU.

(21) Applications for academic credit must be submitted by the due dates with full supporting evidence including:

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.

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

(23) For international applicants:

a. Applications for academic credit for international students should be lodged with VU Global at the time of applying for admission to the University.
b. VU Global moves applications to Student Administration.
c. Credit outcome and course duration is notified via letter of offer for course admission.

(24) Normally, domestic applicants will be informed of the amount of academic credit 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.

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Part E - College Process for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

(25) This process relates to applications for academic credit for higher education courses based on informal or non-formal learning.

(26) Assessing applications for academic credit based on informal or non-formal learning is the responsibility of the relevant Course Chair or equivalent.

(27) The applicant may be required to supply certified copies of statements from employers, present a portfolio, attend an interview, submit a statement addressing the learning outcomes or demonstrate their achievement of learning outcomes through an appropriate form of assessment.

(28) Applicants may be invited to attend an interview to discuss their application.

(29) Equivalence is assessed in terms of AQF level, currency of experience/learning, volume of learning and the requirements of the unit, including:

a. Achieving particular learning outcomes
b. Provision of skills and knowledge that are pre-requisites for later units, or
c. Professional accreditation requirements.

(30) Once an assessment of RPL has been made, the application will be referred with outcome to the relevant Student Administration team for notification.

Part F - Process for Assessment of Academic Credit Based on Prior Studies

(31) Following receipt of an application for admission with academic credit, Admissions, Pathways and Credit will take the following actions:

a. Verify that the application for credit complies with Credit Policy requirements.
b. If the application relates to a formal pathway agreement, process application as granted.
c. 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.
d. If the application relates to units or courses for which there is a precedent, process the application according to the precedent.
e. If the application relates to units or courses for which there is no agreed precedent, refer to the Course Chair for assessment.
f. If the application relates to a request for recognition of prior learning, refer the application to the Course Chair (see Part E).

(32) If the application relates to TNE delivery or VU Sydney/Brisbane, the relevant Site Coordinator will be the key contact point. If the application relates to VU Online, the relevant Associate Dean, Learning and Teaching will be the key contact person.

(33) Once an assessment of academic credit has been made, the Course Chair or key contact person, will notify Admissions, Pathways and Credit of the outcomes.

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Part G - Precedents for Credit

(34) When an application for credit is approved, it may give rise to the creation of a precedent. A precedent will ensure that future course applicants who apply for credit with the same prior study will:

a. be able to obtain a strong indication of the available credit before application;
b. be able to be processed quickly; and
c. receive comparable outcomes, reinforcing a consistent approach to the allocation of credit.

(35) Precedents are established following the approval of an individual application for credit. Precedents arise in circumstances where the assessment of the application suggests that the prior study presented by the applicant will consistently provide a robust basis for granting credit.

(36) Precedents may be identified by Unit Convenors (or equivalent) or Course Chairs (or equivalent) who have assessed and approved an individual application for credit.

(37) Precedents must be:

a. able to be mapped against the destination course content, structure, and learning outcomes;
b. evidence-based, with adequate appropriate documentation to demonstrate equivalency of learning; and
c. replicable for multiple applicants with the same prior learning.

(38) In the instance that a potential precedent is identified:

a. If the Unit Convenor has identified the precedent, they make a recommendation to the Course Chair that the prior study be accepted as a precedent;
b. The Course Chair considers the recommendation and:
    i. if they consider it has merit, will refer the precedent to the Program head for approval, or
    ii. denies the precedent.
c. If the Course Chair has identified the precedent, they may recommend to the Program Head for approval.
d. If the precedent is approved, Admissions, Pathways and Credit ensures it is added to the Precedent Database and made available for reference in assessing future applications.

(39) Where the potential precedent relates to a double degree:

a. both Course Chairs must be involved in the review of a recommendation to create a precedent.
b. The Course Chair of the course in which the units reside (for which the credit is being sought) is the final decision-maker.

(40) Where the potential precedent relates to a unit/units of study that belong to multiples courses, the final decision–maker will be the course Chair of the area owning the units.

(41) Once a precedent has been approved and added to the database, Admissions, Pathways and Credit will apply the precedent to new applications with the same prior study.

(42) All the general credit rules, outlined in Part B, regarding the recency of past study, the maximum amount of allowable credit, and all other matters, will continue to apply to applications involving precedents.

Reviewing Precedents

(43) Precedents are subject to review every five years, aligning with Comprehensive Course Review and internal

course re-accreditation. An earlier review can be triggered by:

a. changes to the VU course;
b. changes to the units or course from which the credit precedent is derived;
c. changes to AQF or other regulatory requirements;
d. changes to professional accreditation requirements; or
e. any other change that affects the legitimacy or utility of the precedent.

(44) When a precedent is due to expire in the coming quarter, Admissions, Pathways and Credit will alert the Course Chair.

(45) After reviewing the precedent details, the Course Chair may:

a. approve the renewal of the precedent; or
b. not approve the renewal of the precedent (in which case, the precedent will lapse upon its expiry date).

Precedent Database

(46) The University will maintain a database of credit application outcomes and precedents, managed by Admissions, Pathways and Credit.

(47) The University will provide a public-facing Credit Calculator. The Calculator will enable applicants to obtain indicative estimates of their credit position where they have prior studies that match an existing precedent.

Part H - Notification and Review

(48) Applicants will be notified within 10 University business days of:

a. The credit outcome;
b. If granted, the amount of credit granted;
c. Any further steps they need to take; and
d. If denied credit, referral to the review process outlined in Part K of the Credit Policy.

(49) Where the application relates to academic credit under a formal pathway agreement or claimed from previous equivalent VU units, the University will endeavour to notify applicants within five business days.

(50) For international applicants VU Global provides a written record of the credit outcome and retains the written record of acceptance for two years after the student ceases to be an accepted student.

(51) For international students Admissions, Pathways and Credit provides a written record of the credit outcome and retains the written record of acceptance for two years after ceasing to be an enrolled student.

(52) Applicants whose application for credit is denied may seek review as outlined in the Credit Policy.

Section 5 - TEQSA/ASQA/ESOS Alignment

(53) Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 (Cth): Standard 1.2: Credit and Recognition of Prior Learning; Standard 7.2: Information for Prospective and Current Students.

(54) ESOS Act - National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018: Standard 2: Recruitment of an Overseas Student (specifically 2.1, 2.3).

(55) Academic credit is subject to the conditions of professional accreditation bodies for courses that lead to entry into regulated professions, where these exist. For such courses (e.g. Law, Nursing) academic credit can only be given for units that are certified to be equivalent in an accredited course at another institution.

Section 6 - Definitions

(56) Advanced Standing: Refer to Credit definition. Advanced Standing term is being phased out and referred to as Credit.

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

(58) Block Credit: Granted toward whole stages or components of a qualification, 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.

(59) Same/similar discipline: Refers to a prior qualification or studies that is demonstrably the same as or very similar to the discipline to the one for which a person seeks academic credit.

(60) 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.

(61) 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.

(62) 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.

(63) 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.

(64) 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.

(65) Designated Credit: Credit given for specific units undertaken at VU when the result for that unit is also transferred and indicated against the unit on the academic transcript. The result may or may not contribute to GPA calculation depending on the approved circumstances for the use of designated credit.

(66) Unspecified Credit: Credit granted towards components of a qualification or program of learning, such as minor studies where options exist or where block credit is applied, but the credit is not applied against a specific unit/s.

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