

Credit Policy

Section 1 - Summary

(1) This Policy provides a principled basis for the granting of credit towards Victoria University (VU) Awards and accredited courses and units on the basis of formal, informal and non-formal learning, through credit transfer, advanced standing, recognition of prior learning, and recognition of current competency.

Section 2 - Scope

(2) This Policy applies to current and future domestic and international students of all VU Award and accredited courses, or accredited units within non-accredited courses, whether in Higher Education (HE) or Vocational Education and Training (VET).

(3) This Policy applies to credit granted on the basis of:

- a. applications from individual students;
- b. formal credit agreements within VU;
- c. formal credit agreements and pathways between VU and other tertiary institutions, whether within Australia or overseas; and
- d. formal agreements between VU and industry partners.

(4) This Policy covers:

- a. credit granted for prior or concurrent formal learning;
- b. credit granted for recognition of prior learning; and
- c. credit granted for recognition of current competency.

Section 3 - Definitions

(5) Advanced Standing

(6) Block Credit

(7) Cognate

(8) Credit

(9) Credit Arrangements

(10) Credit Transfer

(11) Formal Learning

(12) Informal Learning

(13) Non-formal Learning

(14) Pathways

(15) Precedent: In the context of credit, precedent refers to credit determinations that have been made in the past for the same units or courses that an applicant is requesting credit for.

(16) Recognition of Current Competency

(17) Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

(18) Specified Credit

(19) Unspecified Credit

Section 4 - Policy Statement

Part A - General

(20) The objectives of this Policy are to:

- a. provide a basis for granting students with credit for learning already achieved;
- b. support the development and implementation of qualification pathways for students;
- c. recognise that learning can be formal, non-formal or informal; and
- d. provide consistency in outcomes for applicants.

(21) The [Higher Education Standards Framework \(Threshold Standards\) 2021 \(Cth\)](#), the [Standards for Registered Training Organisations \(RTOs\) 2015 \(Cth\)](#) and the [AQF Qualifications Pathways Policy](#) apply to the assessment of credit at VU and form the basis of the rules below. In particular:

- a. pathways for credit will be available into and between qualifications;
- b. credit pathways may be horizontal across qualifications with outcomes at the same Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) level as well as vertical between qualifications with outcomes at different AQF levels;
- c. all pathways will be clearly publicised;
- d. credit is available for courses and competencies within courses; and
- e. decisions regarding applications for credit will be fair, transparent and evidence-based.

(22) Credit can facilitate student progress, completion and mobility. However, the integrity of VU Awards and accredited courses and units, and the success of its students, are the primary considerations. Credit will not be granted if it would:

- a. impair the integrity of the Award or accredited course;
- b. reduce a student's likelihood of success in the program; or
- c. impact on entry into regulated professions.

Part B - Eligibility for Credit

(23) A student is eligible for credit for learning that:

- a. is relevant;
- b. is equivalent to current knowledge and/or practices (for HE courses, the learning must have been completed within 5 years of the application for credit, and a shorter period may be specified if required for professional accreditation reasons); and
- c. satisfies the current learning or competency outcomes of the course.

(24) Credit is available towards a VU Award or accredited course regardless of the location at which the course is taught.

(25) Credit may be available for formal, informal or non-formal learning undertaken in any language and any mode, including online learning. In the case of formal learning undertaken outside Australia, the award must be deemed by AEI-NOOSR to be equivalent in level to an AQF qualification for which credit would be available, as advised by Victoria University International (VUI).

(26) Where the learning has been undertaken in a language other than English, applicants' English language proficiency must be demonstrated at the level required for the stage at which they will enter the VU course (e.g. if, with the credit granted, they will enter the course at third-year level, they must demonstrate the necessary language proficiency for third year studies in the course).

(27) Learning will be measured against the learning or competency outcomes of the courses for which the student has applied for credit.

(28) To be eligible for credit, a student must have successfully completed the relevant course or unit. Provided that the student has passed, however, credit is not dependent on grades achieved in the formal study which forms the basis of the student's application.

(29) Credit will not be given on the basis of:

- a. a failed course or unit;
- b. a conceded pass or equivalent (however, credit is available for a supplementary pass); or
- c. credit awarded towards a previous course on the basis of credit transfer.

(30) VU reserves the right to review and verify the credit determinations made by other providers, where these are relied upon by an applicant.

Part C - Limitations on Credit

(31) Maximum limitations apply to the application of credit to HE 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. Credit is offered for final year units in undergraduate degrees only where these do not form a core requirement of the degree.
- e. Credit is not available for capstone units or thesis components of any course.

(32) Credit is not available for enabling or bridging courses.

(33) The relevant Dean may reduce the allowable maximum credit for any course to fulfil professional accreditation requirements.

(34) There is no limit on credit available for VET courses.

Part D - Credit and Pathways Agreements

(35) The University may enter into pathway agreements and credit agreements:

- a. internally, between different Colleges or between Colleges and Victoria University Polytechnic;
- b. with other tertiary institutions; and
- c. with industry partners.

(36) These agreements may include a commitment to provide students with guaranteed entry into and/or credit towards a course.

(37) A credit agreement may be made within VU, involving courses across AQF levels. Such agreements are only valid if approved by the relevant College Directors of Learning and Teaching or, if the agreement involves entry into VET courses, the Director, Quality, Learning and Support, Victoria University Polytechnic.

(38) A credit agreement must include terms establishing the following aspects of the agreement:

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

(39) A pathway / credit agreement may be made between VU and another Australian tertiary institution that issues AQF qualifications. Such agreements are only valid if approved by the Provost.

(40) If the agreement involves entry into VET courses, the endorsement of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Vocational Education must be obtained.

(41) A pathway / credit agreement may be made between VU and an overseas tertiary institution that is deemed by AEI-NOOSR to offer the qualification for which VU will offer credit at a level equivalent to the corresponding AQF level qualification. Such agreements are only valid if approved by the Provost and the Senior Vice-President and Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Global (Interim).

(42) If the agreement involves entry into VET courses, the endorsement of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Vocational Education, must be obtained.

(43) When negotiating credit agreements with other organisations, the University will consider whether the following aspects of programs involved in the credit agreement are comparable and equivalent:

- a. the learning outcomes of the qualification;
- b. the volume of learning;
- c. the AQF or equivalent level;
- d. the program of study and the content of the program; and
- e. learning and assessment approaches.

(44) Eligibility for credit towards a course on the basis of an agreement does not guarantee entry into the course, unless that is a stated term of the agreement (ie guaranteed pathways).

(45) Students entering a VU course on the basis of a credit agreement may be required to complete prerequisite courses where their enrolment in the previous program has not included content equivalent to these prerequisite courses.

(46) The process for developing pathway / credit agreements is established in the [Credit - Pathways Procedure](#).

(47) All pathway / credit agreements are contracts, and must be managed, filed and maintained in accordance with the University's [Contracts Policy](#), [Contracts Procedure](#) and [Records Management Policy](#).

Part E - Individual Applications for Credit - HE Courses

Applications for credit based on past formal learning

(48) An applicant or student may apply for credit on an individual basis, outside of a credit or pathway agreement.

(49) Applications for credit must be:

- a. timely;
- b. appropriately evidenced; and
- c. Related to prior learning in the same or a cognate discipline.

(50) When assessing applications for credit, VU will apply past precedents where available to ensure consistency of outcome.

(51) Individual credit applications will be considered in the light of the following elements of the past study:

- a. the learning outcomes of the qualification;
- b. the volume of learning;
- c. the AQF level;
- d. the program of study and the content of the program; and
- e. learning and assessment approaches.

(52) The process for applying for and assessing individual credit applications is established in the [Credit - Advanced Standing Procedure \(HE\)](#).

Applications for credit based on past informal or non-formal learning

(53) Informal and non-formal learning may be used to claim Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) or Recognition of Current Competency (RCC), and convert this into credit in some HE courses.

(54) No RPL or RCC is available for research courses at VU.

(55) Where credit for informal or non-formal learning is sought for entry into a HE course, assessment of learning is conducted by the relevant Course Chair or equivalent. This process is outlined in the [Credit - Advanced Standing Procedure \(HE\)](#), Part F.

Part F - Individual Applications for Credit - VET Courses

(56) An applicant or student may apply for credit on an individual basis, outside of a credit or pathway agreement.

(57) Applications for credit for VET courses will be assessed in accordance with the [Credit - VET Skills Recognition Procedure](#).

Part G - Assessing Credit Applications

(58) Decisions regarding applications for credit will be:

- a. timely;
- b. evidence-based and transparent;
- c. fair and consistent;
- d. academically defensible;

and will take into account the student's ability to successfully meet the learning outcomes of the Award.

(59) Credit will only be granted if it will not impinge upon:

- a. the integrity of the Award or accredited course or unit, and requirements of the relevant discipline; or
- b. any conditions associated with the professional accreditation of the qualification.

Part H - Professional Accreditation

(60) The granting of course credit is subject to the conditions of professional accreditation bodies, where these exist. For professionally accredited courses (e.g. Law, Nursing) credit can only be given for formal learning that is considered to be equivalent in a course at another accredited institution.

(61) Where required for professional accreditation reasons, the currency rule specified in clause 23 (b) may be tightened to shorten the period of time within which past learning will be accepted. Courses must specify the currency period in their advisory material to prospective students.

Part I - Reversal of Credit

(62) Credit may be reversed where:

- a. the student requests a reversal (e.g. if they have been admitted on a pathway arrangement, but prefer to still study certain units at VU); or
- b. there has been an administrative error which has led to credit being improperly granted; or
- c. there is evidence of fraud relating to the credit application on behalf of the applicant.

(63) Credit reversal determinations are made by the authorities established in the Delegations section of this Policy.

(64) Credit reversals may only occur prior to, or during, the period of a student's enrolment at VU. If it is discovered after the student has graduated that credit was improperly granted or there has been fraud, the matter must be handled under the Revocation of Awards provisions in the [Awards Regulations 2018](#).

(65) Students must be informed in writing of:

- a. the decision to reverse the credit;
- b. the reasons for the decision;
- c. the implications of the decision for their progress in their course;
- d. their right to access advice from the University;
- e. any other action which the University will take as a result of the decision (e.g. a referral to the Student Misconduct process for a fraud matter); and
- f. their right to request a review of the decision by the Dean of the relevant College.

(66) If a student disputes the reversal of credit decision, the Dean of the relevant College must review the decision and provide a final determination on the matter.

Part J - Review

(67) Applicants who are dissatisfied with the outcome of their application for credit may request a review of the decision on the grounds that:

- a. the applicant demonstrably met all relevant requirements for the granting of credit; and
- b. the application was lodged completely, including providing all requested additional or supporting information, on time and in the correct manner; and
- c. the Credit Policy and/or related procedures were not correctly applied.

(68) A request to review the decision must be lodged in writing, addressed to the Director, Student Administration within 10 University business days of the communication of the credit decision.

(69) The Director, Student Administration will arrange for a review of the selection decision by the relevant authority indicated in the Delegations section of this Policy.

(70) A written outcome will be provided within 10 University business days of the date received by the University.

(71) Where the outcome is in favour of the applicant, and a new offer with credit is subsequently made, the applicant will be required to meet all relevant enrolment criteria in order to enrol.

(72) Where a new offer is made too late for the applicant to reasonably enrol and commence study, with a view to their ability to succeed in the course, a deferment will be applied on the applicant's behalf.

(73) The review is final and cannot be appealed within the University.

Section 5 - Procedures

(74) [Credit - Advanced Standing Procedure \(HE\)](#)

(75) [Credit - Pathways Procedure](#)

(76) [Credit - VET Skills Recognition Procedure](#)

Section 6 - Guidelines

(77) Nil

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Glossary Terms and Definitions

"Advanced Standing" - The term 'advanced standing' is used to describe a form of credit for prior learning. It involves the application of credit towards a student's course of study, usually with respect to entering a course at an advanced stage.

"Block Credit" - Block credit is granted for whole stages or components of a qualification, and does not involve individual student assessment. It is typically arranged through a credit transfer or pathways agreement and is given for a whole section of a course (e.g. a study period 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 study required to achieve a qualification and may be granted through credit transfer, articulation, recognition of prior learning or advanced standing.

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

"Credit Transfer" - 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.

"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.

"Formal Learning" - Prior or concurrent studies that are provided by a recognised higher education or VET provider (or equivalent for overseas studies) and would, if completed, lead to an Award under the Australian Qualifications

Framework (AQF) or relevant national equivalent for overseas studies.

"Informal Learning" - Learning that takes place in a practical context without any studies being undertaken. Knowledge, skills and experience acquired through work is a common category of informal learning.

"Non-formal Learning" - Learning that takes place within a teaching or instructional context, where the studies are not part of an Award course. Examples may include Non-Award studies offered by training or higher education providers; executive education; workplace and continuing professional education. Non-formal learning can only be used for credit where an assessment of competence or skills has occurred as part of the learning.

"Recognition of Current Competency" - Recognition of current competency applies if a person has previously successfully completed the requirements for a unit of competency or module and is now required, (e.g. by a licensing authority) to be reassessed to ensure that the competence is being maintained.

"Specified Credit" - Credit granted towards particular or specific components of a qualification or program of learning, such as a core or required major or particular units.

"Unspecified Credit" - Credit granted towards optional components of a qualification or program of learning, such as elective studies.