

# Recognition of Prior Learning Policy

## Section 1 - Purpose and Scope

(1) Consistent with compliance obligations under relevant federal legislation and the [Australian Qualifications Framework](#) (AQF), this Policy sets out the principles and requirements for the recognition of prior formal, non-formal and informal learning for the purpose of:

- a. meeting the admission requirements of a coursework program, including satisfying prerequisites or prior study requirements, in conjunction with the [Admission to Coursework Procedure](#);
- b. granting credit towards completion of a program; and
- c. granting exemption from completing a course specified for a coursework program, where there is no reduction to the units required to satisfy the program requirements and another UQ course is completed in place of the exempted course.

(2) This Policy applies to:

- a. all UQ coursework programs;
- b. all coursework students; and
- c. applicants for admission to a UQ coursework program (hereafter 'program').

### Implementation

(3) This Policy will apply to decisions regarding admission, credit or exemption made from 1 January 2022 for Semester 1, 2022 enrolments onwards.

## Section 2 - Principles and Key Requirements

### General Principles

(4) Recognition of prior learning (RPL) at UQ will:

- a. maintain the integrity, quality and standards of the University's programs;
- b. be based on learning and evidence that is valid, authentic, current and sufficient;
- c. recognise learning regardless of how and where it was acquired, provided that the learning is relevant and current and contributes to the requirements of the program;
- d. not disadvantage a student in achieving the learning outcomes for a program;
- e. be academically defensible; and
- f. be equitable and transparent, and applied consistently and fairly.

### RPL for Admission

(5) Prior learning may be recognised in accordance with the general principles above for demonstrating equivalence to the admission requirements of UQ programs specified in the [Admission to Coursework Procedure](#) and its associated

schedules. Eligibility for credit does not guarantee admission to a program.

## **RPL for Credit or Exemption**

(6) Students are not expected to repeat learning that has been successfully completed at a similar level and standard elsewhere, and where that work is substantially the same in content and standard as that required for the student's current program of study at the University. Subject to the general principles above, credit or exemption may be granted in accordance with this Policy.

(7) The following types of credit for prior learning are granted at the University towards a program, subject to the requirements of this Policy and the limits specified in the 'Limits on RPL' provisions below:

- a. Specified credit – credit granted for a specific UQ course when an exact or near exact equivalence to a UQ course can be demonstrated. Wherever possible, specified credit should be granted. Specified credit is typically granted for compulsory courses.
- b. Unspecified credit – credit granted when an exact or near exact equivalence cannot be demonstrated. Unspecified credit is typically granted for elective courses.
- c. Reduced program duration credit – credit granted into select master's programs, as a reduction in the number of units required to complete a program. The reduction is in 8-unit blocks, and the program requirements will specify the remaining units applicable for the reduced duration.

(8) The University reserves the right to rescind credit or an exemption if it was granted as a result of a procedural error, incomplete information, inaccurate information or fraud. Granted reduced program duration credit may be rescinded at the request of the student on the approval of the Associate Dean (Academic).

## **Limits on RPL**

(9) Subject to the [Schedule of RPL and Credit Limit Variations](#), the following limits apply to RPL and credit counted towards the completion of a program:

- a. No credit or exemption will be granted for prior learning with failing grades (or equivalent), including a grade of 3 (marginal fail, conceded pass or equivalent).
- b. Students who obtain a failing grade, including a grade of 3, for a UQ course will not be granted credit or exemption for equivalent learning completed prior to enrolment in the UQ course – unless the credit/exemption was sought prior to the census date of first enrolment in the UQ course.
- c. For the purposes of credit, successfully completed learning, including UQ coursework, is deemed to be current for a maximum period of 10 calendar years from the time the learning was undertaken, or 2 calendar years if the learning is for a 16-unit bachelor's honours program. The Associate Dean (Academic) may, at their discretion, extend the period of currency for individual students enrolled in 16-unit bachelor's honours programs.
- d. Credit will not be granted for prior learning that exceeds the applicable period of currency before the expected completion of the program, unless the learning is being used for:
  - i. reduced program duration credit; or
  - ii. unspecified credit for general electives.
- e. Credit for prior learning that exceeds the applicable period of currency before the completion of the program will be cancelled unless the Associate Dean (Academic) permits the student to retain the credit subject to any conditions (for example, demonstrating retention of learning).
- f. Where prior learning is used to satisfy the entry requirements for admission to a program, no credit will be granted unless the applicant has completed learning that is additional to and above the minimum requirements for admission to the program.

- g. A student enrolled in a program must successfully complete the minimum units specified below from UQ courses not credited towards another completed UQ award (note - for the purpose of this Policy, “completed award” does not include an award that is surrendered):
- 16-unit bachelor’s honours programs – 75% of the total units required (12 units);
  - Postgraduate coursework programs – 50% of the total units required;
  - Undergraduate coursework programs – 33% of the total units required, rounded up to the nearest multiple of 2;
  - Dual programs structured as two component parts – each component is subject to the minimum unit requirements above (e.g. 50% for a postgraduate component in a dual program); or
  - All other coursework programs – 33% of the total units required, rounded up to the nearest multiple of 2.

For reference, the maximum credit limits for postgraduate and undergraduate coursework programs are specified in Tables 1 and 2:

Table 1: Maximum credit for postgraduate coursework programs

Program requirements (units)	Limit of credit (units)	Minimum remaining units to complete
8	4	4
16	8	8
>24	12	12
32	16	16
40	20	20
48	24	24
64	32	32

Table 2: Maximum credit for undergraduate coursework programs

Program requirements (units)	Limit of credit (units)	Minimum remaining units to complete*
16	10	6
24	16	8
32	20	12
40	26	14
48	32	16
64	42	22
80	52	28

\*(rounded up to nearest multiple of 2)

- h. Despite clause 9(g), in applying the maximum credit limit:
- granted credit for UQ courses transferred from an incomplete program will be treated as study completed in the program;
  - courses completed as part of the same postgraduate coursework suite will be treated as study completed while enrolled in the program;
  - if a student is granted reduced program duration credit, the maximum credit limit in clause 9(g) will apply to the reduced program;
  - credit will not be granted towards a program or plan for more than half the units required at level 3 or higher, except for study completed on an approved semester-based exchange; and
  - for bachelor’s honours-embedded programs where the class of honours is calculated over 16 units, no more than 4 units of credit can be granted towards courses that contribute to the calculation of the class of honours.
- i. At any point in time a course cannot be credited towards more than one incomplete program.
- j. Despite clause 9(i), where a student is concurrently enrolled in two separate bachelor’s or higher level programs (i.e. not a recognised dual program, and not an undergraduate diploma), the Associate Dean

(Academic) may approve that a course be credited towards both programs to allow simultaneous completion of both programs, where such credit would have been permitted if the programs had been completed sequentially.

- k. Where credit is granted for prior learning completed at another institution, the grade achieved for the prior learning is not recorded on the student's academic transcript.

### **Approval and Review of Exceptions to Credit Restrictions and Limits**

(10) Program- and discipline-specific variations to the limits and restrictions specified in the 'Limits on RPL' provisions listed on the [Schedule of RPL and Credit Limit Variations](#) are:

- a. approved by the Vice-Chancellor through the [Program Approval Procedure](#); and
- b. reviewed by the faculties through their quality assurance processes or as required.

### **Articulation and Credit Transfer Agreements**

(11) Articulation and credit transfer agreements established by the University or the faculties with partner institutions (domestic or international) will be consistent with the requirements of this Policy in conjunction with:

- a. [Collaborative Academic Program Arrangements Policy](#), and
- b. [International Agreements Policy](#) (in the case of international partnerships).

(12) All requirements outlined in the agreement are to be met by the partner institution(s) and the student(s) covered under the agreement.

### **Transition Provision**

(13) Articulation and credit transfer agreements in place prior to 31 December 2020 will be considered grandfathered until the date the agreement expires or is scheduled for review, and RPL outcomes from those agreements will remain valid for affected students. Where feasible, reviews should be brought forward to meet the requirements under this Policy.

## **Section 3 - Roles, Responsibilities and Accountabilities**

### **Vice-Chancellor**

(14) The Vice-Chancellor approves program and discipline-specific variations to the credit limits specified in the 'Limits on RPL' provisions above.

### **Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)**

(15) The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) is responsible for implementation and review of this Policy.

### **Associate Dean (Academic)**

(16) The Associate Dean (Academic) is responsible for RPL assessment and quality assurance processes within the Faculty.

(17) The Associate Dean (Academic) also provides reports to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) and the Academic Board through the Committee for Academic Programs Policy to demonstrate and provide assurance of compliance with this Policy as required.

## Section 4 - Monitoring, Review and Assurance

(18) Review of, and compliance with, this Policy is overseen by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) and the Committee for Academic Programs Policy.

## Section 5 - Recording and Reporting

(19) Records concerning this Policy including the approval of program- and discipline-specific variations to the limits specified in the 'Limits on RPL' provisions above are maintained in accordance with the [Information Management Policy](#).

(20) Records concerning applications for credit or exemption, and University decisions, are filed in the applicant/student's record in the University's official records systems.

(21) Where feasible, precedents from credit/exemption decisions involving formal learning are recorded in the [Credit Precedent Database](#).

## Section 6 - Appendix

### Definitions, Terms, Acronyms

Term	Definition
AQF	<a href="#">Australian Qualifications Framework</a> .
Articulation	Articulation pathways that facilitate the progression of students from a partner institution (either domestic or international) to UQ. Articulation involves the recognition of study completed at a partner institution to allow admission and/or credit and/or exemption to a specified UQ program under specified conditions (for example, study undertaken in a completed undergraduate diploma at another institution is used as credit towards a bachelor level program at UQ).
Associate Dean (Academic)	The relevant Associate Dean (Academic) of the Faculty administering the program.
Block Credit	Where credit involves a specific number of units for components of a given program.
Course	A distinct unit of study within a program, for which a grade is given. Each course is identified by its alphanumeric code, a title and a fixed unit value. Courses are normally completed in one or two semesters. Course level identifiers are outlined in the <a href="#">Course Design Policy</a> .
Credit	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, or recognition of prior learning.
Credit Transfer	A process that provides students with agreed and consistent credit outcomes for components of a qualification based on identified equivalence in content and learning outcomes between matched qualifications.
Dual Program	A sequence of study under one set of program requirements that leads to two awards conferred simultaneously on separate testamurs. A dual program uses cross-crediting of courses so that the program duration is shorter than the sum of those for the constituent awards.
Exemption	Waiver of a requirement to complete a course specified for a program, where there is no reduction to the units required to satisfy the program requirements and another UQ course is completed in place of the exempted course.
Formal Learning	Learning that takes place through structured courses and/or programs completed at this or another higher education institution but may include studies undertaken at other accredited private learning organisations.

Term	Definition
General Electives	Courses in any “general electives” building block in a program structure (see <a href="#">Program Design Policy</a> ).
Informal Learning	Learning that takes place through life and work experience, and is less structured in nature than formal or non-formal learning (in terms of objectives, time or learning support).
Non-formal Learning	Learning that takes place through completion of a structured program of learning but does not lead to a formally recognised qualification.
Plan	A prescribed combination of courses within a program being either a field of study, major, extended major, specialisation, minor or extended minor.
Postgraduate Coursework Suite	A multi-step progression of postgraduate programs offered under the same program title.  Example: 1. Graduate Certificate in Business Administration; 2. Graduate Diploma in Business Administration; 3. Master of Business Administration.
Prior Learning	Any learning that has taken place prior to admission to a program of the University or prior to undertaking a relevant component of a program.
Program	A sequence of study leading to the award of a qualification such as an undergraduate degree or diploma, and/or a postgraduate coursework qualification.
Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)	A process that involves assessment of an individual’s relevant prior learning (including formal, informal and non-formal learning) to determine eligibility for admission, credit and/or exemption.
Student	For the purpose of this Policy, a student means a person enrolled as a student at the University or undertaking courses, non-award studies or programs at the University.
Units	The value of an individual course which contributes to the total unit requirement of a program. 16 units equals 1 EFTSL – the equivalent full-time study load for a year.

## Status and Details

<b>Status</b>	Historic
<b>Effective Date</b>	12th November 2020
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<b>Approval Authority</b>	Vice-Chancellor and President
<b>Approval Date</b>	12th November 2020
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<b>Policy Owner</b>	Kathryn Blyth Director, Academic Services Division and Academic Registrar
<b>Enquiries Contact</b>	Academic Services Division