

## HE-AP01 CREDIT FOR RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING POLICY AND PROCEDURE

### Abbreviations:

<b>AB</b>	Academic Board
<b>AHE</b>	Apex Australia Higher Education
<b>AQF</b>	Australian Qualifications Framework
<b>BoD</b>	Board of Directors
<b>CC</b>	Course Coordinator
<b>CEO</b>	Chief Executive Officer
<b>CoE / eCoE</b>	Confirmation of Enrolments / electronic Confirmation of Enrolment
<b>CRPL</b>	Conditional Recognition of Prior Learning
<b>EMC</b>	Executive Management Committee
<b>HEP</b>	Higher Education Provider
<b>LMS</b>	Learning Management System
<b>SMS</b>	Student Management System
<b>RPL</b>	Recognition of Prior Learning
<b>SRPL</b>	Recognition of Prior Learning with subject substitution i.e. Credit with Subject Substitution

### 1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy and procedure is to set out AHE's approach to assessing and granting credit in the recognition of prior learning (RPL) in AHE courses and in a manner compliant with mandated higher education standards and reflective of good practice.

### 2. Scope

- 2.1 Applies to all academic management aspects of Apex Australia Higher Education.

### 3. Principles for Recognising Prior Learning

- 3.1 AHE recognises that students have prior learning experiences and should not be required to repeat equivalent learning successfully undertaken in another context in accordance with the **AQF Qualifications Pathways Policy** under the **AQF Qualifications Framework**.
- 3.2 AHE is committed to developing guidelines to grant credit towards a course at AHE based on prior learning from formal studies and/or work experience. This is also to maximise the credit students can gain for learning already undertaken, while preserving the integrity of learning outcomes of the Course at AHE.
- 3.3 The granting of credit toward a Course at AHE in recognition of prior studies and prior work experience will:
- 3.3.1 Be evidence based, transparent, equitable and accessible.
- 3.3.2 Be applied consistently and fairly with decisions subject to appeal and review.

- 3.3.3 Recognise prior learning provided that the prior learning is relevant, current and has a relationship to the learning outcomes of the course at AHE.
- 3.3.4 Be academically defensible and consider the student's chance of success in the course at AHE and that a student will not be disadvantaged in achieving the course's expected learning outcomes.
- 3.3.5 Ensure the integrity of the course at AHE and resulting qualification are maintained.
- 3.3.6 Be decided in a timely way.
- 3.3.7 Ensure that pathways into and between awards are available to all students by furthering articulation pathways with other higher education and vocational training providers and facilitating transfer between courses at AHE.
- 3.3.8 Be formally documented for the student including any reasons for not granting credit.

#### 4. Actions and Responsibilities: Credit for Prior Learning

- 4.1 Basis for Recognising Prior Learning
  - 4.1.1 Entry to an AHE course is based on the **Student Admission Policy and Procedure**. Consequently, an offer of credit for a Course at AHE does not guarantee admission into that Course.
  - 4.1.2 Regardless of the credit granted, the requirements of each Course at AHE must be fulfilled.
  - 4.1.3 Credit can be given in the form of block, specified or unspecified credit.
    - 4.1.3.1 Block credit may be granted as a result of credit and articulation agreements between education providers.
    - 4.1.3.2 Block credit is granted for whole stages or components of a course, often granted as a number of credit points or number of units.
    - 4.1.3.3 Block credit may be specified or unspecified credit.
    - 4.1.3.4 Specified credit involves granting credit for identified subjects, which may be core, specialisation, or elective units.
    - 4.1.3.5 Unspecified credit may be granted against one or more electives from within a course and is used where there is no specific match against an AHE unit within the course.
    - 4.1.3.6 Unspecified credit is awarded based on the content, volume of learning, and level of learning of a student's previous studies matching the requirements of electives within the AHE course.
  - 4.1.4 To receive an award from AHE, students are required to complete a minimum amount of study at AHE.
    - 4.1.4.1 The total external credit granted toward a Course at AHE shall not exceed 50% of the total credit points required for the Course at AHE.
    - 4.1.4.2 The 50% may comprise a mixture of credit for formal study and credit for work experience.
    - 4.1.4.3 This 50% limit to credit does not apply to students who transfer from one AHE course to another; refer to 4.5 'Credit for internal transfer between courses' below of this policy.
  - 4.1.5 Credit granted for a Course at AHE cannot automatically be transferred from one AHE course to another.

#### 4.2 Credit for formal studies: Criteria:

- 4.2.1 Credit will normally only be granted for relevant formal study completed within ten (10) years prior to application for an AHE Course. This may be less for specific courses as approved by the AB and details will be provided in the relevant publicly available course information.
  - 4.2.1.1 Formal study completed more than ten (10) years prior to application for an AHE Course will not be eligible unless there is evidence of continued relevance of this study for the applied AHE Course.
- 4.2.2 Credit may be granted for the successful completion (a passing grade or higher) of formal studies at the appropriate AQF level, including:
  - 4.2.2.1 Units of study which form part of an accredited course provided by a recognised tertiary institution.
  - 4.2.2.2 Non-award courses offered by a recognised tertiary institution (higher than AQF Level 5).
  - 4.2.2.3 Accredited courses at AQF Level 5 and above awarded by a registered tertiary institution.
  - 4.2.2.4 Courses provided by a professional association or other similar body.
  - 4.2.2.5 Where there is substantial overlap with content and/or learning outcomes of AHE units of study in the Course for which credit is claimed.
  - 4.2.2.6 Where the volume of learning is similar to, or exceeds, that of the AHE unit.
  - 4.2.2.7 Upon approval by the Academic Board (AB), specific AHE postgraduate courses may permit the awarding of up to four (4) *units of specified or non-specified credit* based upon units successfully completed within a cognate bachelors' level degree.
  - 4.2.2.8 This is course specific, and details will be provided in the relevant publicly available course information.
- 4.2.3 When assessing credit for formal studies the criteria below will be considered:
  - 4.2.3.1 The educational practices and standards of the external tertiary institution or any accreditation obtained by such tertiary institution that may be relevant to the AHE Course.
  - 4.2.3.2 The objectives of the prior studies and the methods adopted by the external tertiary institution to achieve those objectives.
  - 4.2.3.3 Admission requirements for the external course.
  - 4.2.3.4 The duration of the external course, entry requirements, course objectives.
  - 4.2.3.5 Methods of assessment.
  - 4.2.3.6 Learning outcomes of the course, and unit / subject learning outcome.
  - 4.2.3.7 Volume of learning for the course and the unit.
  - 4.2.3.8 Content of study.
  - 4.2.3.9 Course and program AQF level.
  - 4.2.3.10 Credit point weighting of the unit/subject in the context of the course.
  - 4.2.3.11 Any other relevant criteria.

- 4.2.4 As a guide, the **AQF Qualifications Pathways Policy** for the quantum of credit granted to students towards undergraduate higher level AQF qualifications in the same or related discipline are as follows:
- 4.2.4.1 Up to 50% credit for an Advanced Diploma or Associate Degree linked to a 3-year Bachelor's Degree.
  - 4.2.4.2 Up to 37.5% credit for an Advanced Diploma or Associate Degree linked to a 4-year Bachelor's Degree.
  - 4.2.4.3 Up to 33% credit for a Diploma linked to a 3-year Bachelor Degree.
  - 4.2.4.4 Up to 25% credit for a Diploma linked to a 4-year Bachelor Degree.
- 4.2.5 Normally, recognition of credit from prior learning (or RPL) from prior formal studies will only be granted toward the first and / or second year of bachelor level courses (100-level and 200-level) units.
- 4.3 Credit for learning from work experience:
- 4.3.1 Credit may be granted for prior work experience where learning can be documented to the satisfaction of the CC. The onus shall be on the applicant to provide the appropriate evidence to demonstrate the relevant skills, knowledge and understanding (see below).
  - 4.3.2 If applicable, recognition of credit from prior learning (or RPL) from prior work experience will normally only be granted toward first year units of the course the student applied for.
  - 4.3.3 Evidence required to be submitted include (but is not limited to):
    - 4.3.3.1 A full description of the position, role(s) / activities, and performance outcomes.
    - 4.3.3.2 Employment letter (on business letterhead) including any written references.
    - 4.3.3.3 Current full CV.
    - 4.3.3.4 Evidence that the work experience was equivalent to at least two (2) years full time (paid or volunteer positions) work within the past five (5) years.
    - 4.3.3.5 Evidence of work completed: pay slips; report of performance reviews; involvement in professional associations or development; evidence of work produced e.g., Presentations and collaborations.
    - 4.3.3.6 Any other evidence that the applicant sees fit to demonstrate the existence and relevance of the work experience toward the credit sought.
    - 4.3.3.7 In some cases, students may be required to undertake a challenge test to further demonstrate their prior learning.
- 4.4 When assessing credit for work experience, the following will be considered, including:
- 4.4.1 Comparability – the skills of the work experience are comparable in content and standard with the learning outcomes of the unit(s) of study in which credit is sought.
  - 4.4.2 Authenticity – the applicant has demonstrated the learning outcomes that are being claimed.
  - 4.4.3 Currency – the learning outcomes are still valid and performable.
  - 4.4.4 Quality – the learning has reached the acceptable level.
  - 4.4.5 Relevance – the learning is applicable to the unit of study claimed.
  - 4.4.6 Transferability – the learning outcome can be applied outside the specific context in which it was learned.
- 4.5 Credit for internal transfer between courses:
- 4.5.1 Credit may be granted for units of study completed at AHE toward another AHE course upon receipt of an RPL application from the student.

- 4.5.2 Credit will be granted for those units of study already undertaken which form part of the Course at AHE to which the student is transferring and the grade achieved in the unit will be assigned to the new course.
  - 4.5.3 The maximum credit that can be granted in these circumstances is not limited.
  - 4.6 Credit with Subject Substitution
    - 4.6.1 When normal credit is applied to a course the number of units a student is required to undertake to complete the course is reduced.
      - 4.6.1.1 Rather than reducing the number of units undertaken within a course, student may request that they undertake alternative units to substitute the credited units. This has the effect that number of units undertaken in a course is not reduced upon the approval of Credit with Subject Substitution.
      - 4.6.1.2 Credit with Subject Substitution only applies to compulsory units within a qualification and not electives. When Credit with Subject Substitution is authorised, this is specifically noted on the student's academic record.
      - 4.6.1.3 Application from students for Credit with Subject Substitution cannot be mixed with an application of normal credit. Upon receiving an approved Credit with Subject Substitution, the student may select any other valid unit within their course of study to replace the credited unit.
  - 4.7 Conditional Credit
    - 4.7.1 Conditional credit is also known as Conditional RPL (CRPL). CRPL may be granted in cases where a student needs to provide additional documentation to confirm the RPL (such as an official transcript or course completion certificate). A credit assessor may undertake a credit assessment and include specific conditions that need to be satisfied to finalise the RPL. Any Conditional RPL issued must be accompanied with a clear specification of the conditions that need to be met for the CRPL to be converted to RPL.
    - 4.7.2 Students receiving CRPL must provide appropriate documentation ASAP to meet the conditions specified. Students are expected to normally provide the appropriate documentation prior to the census date of their first semester of study at AHE. If the appropriate documentation is not provided prior to the end of the student's first semester, then the CRPL may be rescinded and deleted from the students record.
- 5. Applying for Credit for Recognition of Prior Learning**
- 5.1 Process:
    - 5.1.1 An application for credit for prior learning must be made on the appropriate form at the time the student applies for admission to AHE.
      - 5.1.1.1 Refer to the Credit for Recognition of Prior Learning Application Form.
      - 5.1.1.2 The application should be accompanied by sufficient documentary evidence to support the application.
      - 5.1.1.3 If sufficient documentary evidence has not been provided the student will be advised to submit the required documentation.
      - 5.1.1.4 All documentation must be submitted prior to the student commencing their studies at AHE.
      - 5.1.1.5 If a student wishes to apply for Credit with Subject Substitution, this must be clearly indicated in the credit application.

- 5.1.2 Completed applications will be reviewed by the CC, who will advise the applicant in writing of the result of their application within ten (10) working days after the complete set of documentation supporting the application for credit has been received.
    - 5.1.2.1 The student will be notified in writing of the decision for the student to accept, including as relevant, a reduced number of units the student may need to study to gain the qualification.
  - 5.1.3 A record of any credit granted (including any reasons for not giving credit) will be signed by the CC and placed on the student's file.
    - 5.1.3.1 A written record of the decision must be provided to the student, with an option to accept or appeal against the decision.
    - 5.1.3.2 A copy of the signed student acceptance or notice to appeal must be retained by AHE.
    - 5.1.3.3 All these records relating to the student's application for credit including copies of documents to support the application, decision, and signed student acceptance will be kept for at least ten (10) years (in digital format) on student file in the student management system (SMS).
  - 5.1.4 AHE reserves the right to refuse an application for credit for prior learning after the second week of classes that the new student is undertaking.
- 5.2 International students:
- 5.2.1 If the applicant is an international student applying for a study visa the following also applies:
    - 5.2.1.1 Where credit is granted before the CoE is issued, the actual course duration in the CoE issued to the student will be reduced to reflect the shorter course duration.
    - 5.2.1.2 The duration of the course will be adjusted to ensure that all international students are studying full-time.
    - 5.2.1.3 The student will be notified in writing including the following: the reduced number of units the student may need to study to gain the qualification; the impact on the course duration; the impact on the eCoE; and the reduced tuition fees payable.
    - 5.2.1.4 Where credit is granted after a visa is issued, AHE will report the change of course duration via PRISMS and issue a new eCoE.
    - 5.2.1.5 The student will be notified in writing including the following: the reduced number of units the student may need to study to gain the qualification; the impact on the course duration; the impact on the eCoE; and the reduced tuition fees payable.
    - 5.2.1.6 Where students only receive Credit with Subject Substitution there is no adjustment required to the course duration as the student is still required to complete the normal number of units specified within a qualification.
  - 5.2.2 If an international student is granted credit that shortens their course, it remains a visa condition that they still need to continue to study full-time.

## **6. Articulation agreements (credit agreements)**

- 6.1 External Articulation Agreements:
  - 6.1.1 AHE may make formal agreements with other tertiary education providers to maximise the credit available to eligible students for entry into AHE's courses, where appropriate. These agreements will provide graduates of specific courses offered by recognised providers of tertiary education credit toward an AHE Course.

- 6.1.2 When making these agreements, AHE will consider the comparability and equivalence of the articulating institution's course, notably the learning outcomes; the volume of learning; the content; and learning and assessment approaches.
- 6.1.3 To assess the quantum of credit which may be awarded, AHE will map the specified learning outcomes for the course provided by the external institution against the learning outcomes of the AHE Course. Credit for a unit of study within the AHE Course will be granted only where there is a substantial match against the learning outcomes of that unit of study.
- 6.1.4 The AQF Qualifications Pathways Policy for the quantum of credit granted to students towards higher level AQF qualifications in the same or related discipline are as follows:
  - 6.1.4.1 Up to 50% credit for an Advanced Diploma or Associate Degree linked to a 3-year Bachelor Degree.
  - 6.1.4.2 Up to 37.5% credit for an Advanced Diploma or Associate Degree linked to a 4-year Bachelor Degree.
  - 6.1.4.3 Up to 33% credit for a Diploma linked to a 3-year Bachelor Degree.
  - 6.1.4.4 Up to 25% credit for a Diploma linked to a 4-year Bachelor Degree.
- 6.1.5 The existence of an articulation/credit agreement does not preclude an individual student applying for additional credit.
- 6.1.6 Articulation arrangements enable students to progress from one completed qualification to another with admission and credit in a defined pathway.
  - 6.1.6.1 AHE may have articulation agreements with other institutions for students to articulate or continue further study at AHE with these students being given a certain number of credits toward the AHE Course in recognition of completing a specific course at the other institution.
- 6.1.7 The Academic Board considers and approves all articulation arrangements after evidence of the mapping of the learning outcomes of the external course against the AHE Course underpinning the proposed credit arrangements considered.
  - 6.1.7.1 Once approved by the Academic Board, the articulation arrangement will be set out in a formal articulation/credit agreement, signed by both parties and recorded in a register of approved articulation agreements.
- 6.1.8 AHE will make publicly available details of all current articulation agreements on the AHE website in accordance with the AQF Qualifications Pathways Policy.
- 6.2 Internal articulation arrangements:
  - 6.2.1 AHE may develop internal articulation arrangements to enable graduates of lower AQF level courses offered by AHE to articulate to higher AQF level courses offered by AHE, where appropriate.
  - 6.2.2 The process for developing these arrangements and determining the quantum of credit will be the same for external articulation arrangements.

## **7. Appeals:**

- 7.1 A student may appeal against a decision on the granting of credit.
- 7.2 The grounds for an appeal need to be that the decision is inconsistent with this Procedure.
- 7.3 Appeals must be made in writing and lodged with the Dean within ten (10) working days of the student receiving written notification of the decision.
- 7.4 The Dean will respond to the appeal within twenty working days and may confirm or vary the decision.

- 7.5 All decisions of the Dean in relation to credit application appeals will be regularly reported to the Learning and Teaching Committee.
- 7.6 If a student remains dissatisfied with the outcome of their appeal against a decision regarding the award of credit, they may utilise the AHE Student Grievance, Complaint and Appeal Procedure.

#### **8. Dissemination and Publication:**

- 8.1 This Policy and Procedure will be published on the publicly accessible AHE website.
- 8.2 Students will also be advised of this Policy and Procedure during Orientation in the AHE Student Handbook.

#### **9. Relevant Legislation, Benchmarking Documents and Relevant Websites:**

##### Legislation

- [Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000](#)
- [Higher Education Standards Framework \(Threshold Standards\) 2021](#) – Standards 1, 2 & 7 (specifically 1.1.2b, 1.1.3, 1.2.1, 1.2.2a,b, 2.4.2, 1.5.7b, 7.2, 7.2.2a,d & 7.3.2g).
- [National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018](#)

##### Benchmarking Documents

- [AIH Advanced Standing Policy](#)
- [AQF Qualifications Pathways Policy](#)
- [RMIT University Credit Policy, Currency of Learning Guidelines, Credit Procedure](#)
- [University of Queensland Credit for Previous Studies and Recognised Prior Learning](#)

##### Relevant Websites

- [Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students \(CRICOS\)](#)
- [Department of Home Affairs](#)
- [TEQSA National Register](#)

#### **10. Related Documents**

- Credit for Prior Learning Application Form
- English Language Requirements for Admission
- International Students Fees Payment Policy and Procedure
- International Students Fees Refund Policy and Procedure
- Letter of Offer and Student Written Agreement
- Orientation Power Point
- SARAS (Student at Risk Academic Support) Agreement and Review
- Student Academic Progression Policy and Procedure
- Student Admission Policy and Procedure
- Student Grievance, Complaint and Appeal Procedure
- Student Handbook

#### **11. Definitions**

Refer to:

- Table of Acronyms and Definitions



## Version Control

<b>Document Name</b>		Credit for Recognition of Prior Learning Policy and Procedure		
<b>Document Code</b>		HE-AP01		
<b>Department</b>		Academic Management		
<b>Approved By</b>		Academic Board / Board of Directors	<b>Date Approved</b>	25 June 2018; 26 August 2021; 16 May 2024
<b>Revision History</b>				
Version	Date of Changes	Change Summary	Author	Review Due
V1.0	9 April 2018	New Document	CEO / Executive Dean	April 2021
V1.1	25 June 2018	Procedure added under Section 3; Section 4.1 Up To added; Benchmarking documents clarified including the AQF Qualifications Pathway Policy	CEO / Executive Dean	June 2021
V1.2	5 October 2018	Corrected typos. Externally reviewed by Prof J Edwards 30 October 2018	CEO / Executive Dean	October 2021
V1.3	14 November 2018	Corrected formatting and consistency	CEO / Executive Dean	November 2021
V2.0	February 2021	Credit to be awarded for prior formal studies and prior work experience is now clarified and revised; process for application now more formalised; students will be advised of shorter course duration and reduced fees. Refer to Credit for Prior Learning Application Form	CEO / Executive Dean	February 2024
V2.0a	May 2021	Section 3.1b "reviewed" by Course Coordinator	CEO / Executive Dean	May 2024
V2.1a	26 August 2021 7 September 2021	Policy amended in 2021 approved. Clarification added that first year subjects are 100-level subjects/ units; SARAS form added, and temporary website added; numbering of sections also corrected. Approved by BoD: 26.08.2021. Approved by AB: 07.09.2021	CEO / Executive Dean	September 2024
V2.1b	25 September 2021	Clarification in Section 2.2e (no change) that as applicable, recognition of credit from prior learning (or RPL) from prior formal studies will only be granted toward first and/or second year (100-level and 200-level) units of the course the student applied for Section 3.1 clarified (no change) to include that a decision is sent to the student and the signed copy is retained by AHE for 2 years. Section 3.2: example given concerning how course duration can be reduced.	CEO / Executive Dean	September 2024

Version	Date of Changes	Change Summary	Author	Review Due
V2.1c	29 September 2021	Revised Website Link for Benchmarking to AIH to go directly to its credit policy	CEO / Executive Dean	September 2024
V3.0	12 May 2023	Added definition of specified, unspecified, and block credit, maximum of credits related to credit for course transfers not being limited to the 50%, tidied reference to Course Guides and prospectus, 'Successful studies' now specifies a passing grade. Added clauses to include postgraduate courses, introduced clause allowing 'challenge tests' regarding assessment of work experience. Added that complete documentation is required for a credit assessment to be undertaken, reviewed the requirement for the LATC to review assessment cases, modified text relating to course duration shortening to make it more generally applicable. Approved: Academic Board	CEO and Dean	May 2026
V3.1	20 June 2023	Update policy to specifically address the difference in undergraduate and postgraduate course (including cognate entry with a postgraduate course allows non-cognate admission. Approved: Academic Board	CEO and Dean	June 2026
V3.2	September 2023	Updated formatting, embedded links, updated version control table. Reviewed and noted at BoD meeting – 04.12.2023	Senior Compliance & Risk Manager	September 2026
V3.3	January 2024	Updated legislation links	Senior Compliance & Risk Manager	January 2027
V3.4	March 2024	Inclusion of policies concerning subject substitution and information regarding CRPL and SRPL including definitions. Approved by Academic Board: 16.05.2024	Dean	March 2027
<b>Organisation</b>		Apex Australia Higher Education		
<b>Document Controller</b>		Senior Compliance & Risk Manager		