



**EXCELSIA
COLLEGE**
Sydney - Australia

Document Name

CREDIT AND RPL POLICY AND PROCEDURES

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Purpose

The College is committed to the principles of:

- undertaking assessments of prior learning for the purpose of granting credit for units of study
- conducting assessments and recording results according to institutional policies
- providing timely written advice of assessment outcomes
- maintaining academic standards that are at least equivalent to those current in Australian universities in order to maintain the integrity of the course and the qualification
- providing the shortest possible pathways to desired awards through the recognition of prior learning wherever such recognition is consistent with these standards, while ensuring that admitted students have the academic preparation needed to participate in, progress through, and successfully complete their intended study

Approach

In general terms, students who have been admitted to one of the College's awards may be granted credit for prior learning where that learning is demonstrably equivalent to learning acquired through successful completion of accredited units at Excelsia College, whether that learning has been acquired through previous academic studies or through less formal means.

Credit may also be awarded into an Excelsia College degree for studies completed at Excelsia College prior to enrolment in the current degree program. After benchmarking its policies against those of its peers, the Academic Board has set maximum levels of credit allowable for every course offered by the College. Credit limits set by the Academic Board for each course must be strictly observed in the granting of credit, and students will not receive double credit for any unit or part thereof.

Credit will only be granted if:

- students granted such credit are not disadvantaged in achieving the expected learning outcomes for the course or qualification; and
- the integrity of the course and qualifications are maintained.

Forms of Credit

Credit may take several forms:

Portability

Where Excelsia College has established a formal portability (articulation) agreement that recognises equivalence between the College's courses and those of another provider, students are awarded pre-determined credit according to the agreement, either as block credit in a field of study or as specified credit for individual units.

Academic Credit for Previous Study

Students enrolling for courses at Excelsia College may apply for credit on the basis of tertiary studies completed prior to their enrolment. Studies undertaken at registered tertiary institutions may be considered for credit where previous studies demonstrate reasonable correspondence to coursework units offered by the College. The College references the *AQF National Guidelines on Cross-sectoral Qualification Linkages* when assessing previous studies completed in the VET sector, and the *AEI-NOOSR Country Education Profiles Online* with respect to all credit assessments involving overseas qualifications.

Undergraduate units are not normally considered for credit into postgraduate awards. However, in circumstances where credit from an advanced (300/400) level undergraduate unit to an introductory (400) level postgraduate unit is sought, and the content of the units in question substantially overlap, the Credit Committee may consider the granting of credit to be appropriate. Credit is not granted from awards used to gain entry to a program.

Academic Credit for Concurrent Study

Applicants wishing to transfer credit into an Excelsia College course from study undertaken concurrently

at another institution must make written application to the Registrar, and receive written approval from the Head of School, prior to undertaking the study. After receiving their results from the completed study, students make application for credit.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

Recognition of relevant and current prior informal and non-formal learning may be used for credit. Credit based on prior learning may be granted for a unit of study, or part of a unit of study, based on prior learning where that learning can be documented in a manner that demonstrates that the student has acquired skills, knowledge and understanding equivalent to that which would be gained if the relevant Excelsia College unit(s) had been completed. The learning outcomes of each unit provide the RPL benchmarks. Professional and para-professional experience, subsequent professional development activities or training and other experience, through work or life, may be taken into account in the granting of prior informal and non-formal credit, provided that the learning can be documented and the applicant can demonstrate the standard they achieved from participating in these activities is comparable to the standard in the course in which they are seeking credit.

Schools and the Credit Review Committee will use the following principles in assessing applications for RPL credit:

1. **Authenticity:** the application identifies the learning outcome being claimed that demonstrates the relevant skills, knowledge and understanding
2. **Currency:** the learning outcome can currently be demonstrated/performed
3. **Quality:** the learning has attained an appropriate academic standard
4. **Relevance:** the learning is applicable to the area claimed
5. **Transferability:** the learning outcome can be applied outside the context in which it was learned
6. **Comparability:** the learning is comparable in content and standard with the unit for which credit is sought.

RPL may be awarded for whole units or parts thereof.

Limits of Credit

Maximum levels of credit allowed have been approved by the Academic Board for each course, as set out in the Credit Matrix outlining the College's general approach to common credit transfer and articulation arrangements.

Regardless of the course of study, credit transfer and/or RPL is limited to 50% of the total credit points required to complete the award.

Recency of Study

In the consideration of applications for credit, attention shall be given to the recency of the study for which the credit is sought. Credit will normally only be given for students undertaken within the preceding five years. In fields of study where the turnover of knowledge is accelerated, shorter time limits may be applied. That is to say, both currency of knowledge and recency of study are criteria for assessing equivalence, and the assessment will consider these criteria.

Responsibilities

Registrar
Assistant Registrars
Heads of Schools
Chief Academic Officer
Credit Committee
Teaching and Learning Committee

Procedures

The College's Credit and RPL Procedure guides staff involved in assessing applications from students. The administrative context for the recognition of prior learning includes systems for monitoring credit granted, and a formal appeals process for the resolution of disputes.

The Academic Board has delegated responsibility for the assessment and granting of credit and RPL to the Heads of School. Reviews and appeals of decisions made by Heads of School is delegated to the Credit Review Committee, whose membership comprises the Head of School, Chief Academic Officer and Registrar.

Credit once approved, and placed upon a student's transcript, cannot be altered or removed at the request of the student. Consequently, the student's formal acceptance of credit offered is important and a requirement of the procedure.

As Convener of the Credit Review Committee, the Registrar manages the credit and RPL reviews and appeals processes. Under the authority of the Credit Review Committee, the Registrar approves or rejects applications and communicates decisions to students. Should a student wish to further appeal a credit or RPL decision, the Registrar will assist the student to access the Student Grievance Policy and Procedures.

Credit

- Students seeking credit against previous studies complete the *Application for Credit* form. The completed form, together with supporting documentation, is sent to the relevant Student Advisor (prospective students) or the Student Services Coordinator (current students). The Student Advisor/Student Services Coordinator ensures all necessary documentation is available, and checks the application for accuracy, as well as researching the accreditation and registration status of previous studies undertaken at institutions other than Australian universities. The Student Advisor/Student Services Coordinator forwards application to the Head of School when complete. After assessment within the School, the Head returns the application to the Student Advisor/Student Services Coordinator together with recommendations. If approved, the application is also forwarded to the Assistant Registrar. Students are required to agree to the application to affirm that they want the credit transfer to be applied once approved. This is to ensure that the student understands that the specific credit applied for cannot be changed once approved.
- The Head of School may present non-standard applications to the Credit Review Committee for assessment, if a decision cannot first be reached with the Chief Academic Officer. The Credit Review Committee considers the recommendation from the Head, and determines whether the application for credit (when taken together with any previous applications for credit from this student) falls within the credit limits set for the course. The Committee also makes sure that any time limitations on credit are correctly applied (e.g. that the qualifying studies/experience have been completed within the last five years). Any such conditions/limitations pertaining to individual courses are published in the Course Information Books. In the process of assessing applications for credit, the Credit Review Committee may consult, as appropriate:
 - Protocols that have been established through process of consultation with the relevant stakeholders and approved by the Academic Board.
 - the AQF *National Guidelines on Cross-Sectoral Qualification Linkages*.
 - the AEI-NOOSR *Country Education Profiles Online*.
- The Credit Review Committee approves or rejects applications for credit or RPL under delegated authority from the Academic Board.
- If the application is approved, the Registrar/Assistant Registrar documents the approved units on Paradigm, and communicates the outcome to the student enclosing the revised record of studies, copying the Head.
- If further assessment is required, the Registrar/Assistant Registrar communicates this decision to the

student.

- If the application is rejected, the Registrar/Assistant Registrar informs the student, and advises the student of his/her right of appeal using the Student Grievance Policy and Procedures.
- The Registrar presents credit review reports to the Learning and Teaching Committee, who in turn report to Academic Board.

RPL

- The applicant submits an *Application for RPL* and a submission/portfolio of prior learning. The portfolio must contain evidence that authenticates previous learning experiences, and a statement which links the learning experiences with the specific learning outcomes of the appropriate Excelsia College units, as published in the unit outlines. This application is forwarded to the relevant Student Advisor (prospective students) or Student Services Coordinator (current students).
- The Student Advisor/Student Services Coordinator checks the application to ensure that all requirements have been addressed, and that supporting evidence is sufficient and appropriate.
- The Student Advisor/Student Services Coordinator forwards the file to the Head of School for detailed analysis.
- After assessment within the School, the Head returns the application to the Student Advisor/Student Services Coordinator together with recommendations. If approved, the application is also forwarded to the Assistant Registrar. Students are required to agree to the application to affirm that they want the credit transfer to be applied once approved. This is to ensure that the student understands that the specific credit applied for cannot be changed once approved.
- The Head of School may present non-standard applications to the Credit Review Committee for assessment, if a decision cannot first be reached with the Chief Academic Officer. The Credit Review Committee considers the recommendation from the Head, and determines whether the application for RPL (when taken together with any previous applications for credit from this student) falls within the credit limits set for the course. The Committee also makes sure that any time limitations on credit are correctly applied. Any such conditions/limitations pertaining to individual courses are published in the Course Information Books. In the process of assessing applications for RPL, the Credit Review Committee may consult, as appropriate:
 - Protocols that have been established through process of consultation with the relevant stakeholders and approved by the Academic Board.
- The Credit Review Committee approves or rejects applications for credit or RPL under delegated authority from the Academic Board.
- If the application is approved, the Registrar/Assistant Registrar documents the approved units on Paradigm, and writes to the student enclosing the revised record of studies, copying the Head.
- If further assessment is required, the Registrar/Assistant Registrar communicates this decision to the student.
- If the application is rejected, the Registrar/Assistant Registrar informs the student, and advises the student of his/her right of appeal using the Student Grievance Policy and Procedures.

The Registrar presents credit review reports to the Learning and Teaching Committee, who in turn report to Academic Board.

Application of Limits of Credit

- Where a student has undertaken prior studies or prior learning that constitutes more than 50% of the total course credit points, there are one or more units of credit that cannot be awarded. Consequently, a decision is required by the student as to which qualifying unit(s) are to be omitted.
- Students in these circumstances are to be advised by the School as to the units that are most suitable for their course, since they are not permitted to change the units granted once approved and processed.

International Students

- The acceptance of credit transfer, RPL or any form of advanced standing has important implications for International students.
- In addition to all relevant processes outlined above, the Registrar's office must document the effect of credit or RPL on course length in the case of students holding student visas. Students are to be advised prior to the finalisation of course unit credit, of the revised duration of study based on the credit for which they have applied, and the length of visa their revised eCoE will allow.
- Students must also be advised that credit points approved and added to their transcript cannot be removed or altered, regardless of their visa circumstances.
- The Registrar adds the following paragraph to the form advising any international student of credit awarded:

"I must remind you that it is a condition of your visa that you be enrolled in full-time study. Even though you have been awarded credit for some units, you must still enrol in a full load each semester until you finish your course. If you complete your course earlier than anticipated because of the credit you have been awarded, you must either enrol in another registered course at that time, or leave Australia. For this reason, you are urged to carefully consider any visa implications before you apply for and accept credit to be awarded into your course of study."

- The Registrar checks to see whether the credit awarded will shorten the course length. If so, Registrar submits the revised course end date to PRISMS and adds the following paragraph to the student letter (following the one above):

"The credit you have been granted has shortened the time you need to complete your course as a full-time student. Your revised eCoE reflecting the new course end date is enclosed. Please take careful note of your revised course end date. After this date, you must either enrol in another registered course or leave Australia."

References and Documentation

Application for Credit

Application for Recognition of Prior Learning

Credit Matrix

Credit and RPL Guidelines for Counselling Practicum Units

TEQSA National Register

Australian Qualifications Framework

Australian Government *Country Education Profiles*

Australian Government *ESOS National Code*