Credit for Previous Studies and Recognised Prior Learning - Procedures

1. Purpose and Objectives
These procedures enact PPL 3.50.03a Credit for Previous Studies and Recognised Prior Learning – Policy [9].

2. Definitions, Terms, Acronyms

AQF – Australian Qualifications Framework [10]

Block credit – credit which is granted as a specific number of units and may be granted on the basis of studies judged to be comparable to part of a given program. Block credit, sometimes referred to as "articulation credit" is often granted where formal agreements exist.

Coursework master – a master other than a research master.


ESOS – Education Services for Overseas Students [4].

Previous formal studies – consideration granted with respect to courses and/or programs completed at this or another higher education institution but may include studies undertaken at TAFE, Open Learning Australia or other accredited private learning organisations.

Queensland Tertiary Admissions Centre (QTAC) – the agency that manages the applications for admission to undergraduate program by domestic applicants.

Recognised Prior Learning (RPL) – previous informal studies that involved learning that is less structured in nature and that can be demonstrated to be equivalent to appropriate University of Queensland studies.

Specified credit – credit which is granted when an exact or near exact equivalence to a UQ course can be demonstrated. Specified credit is more commonly granted in set programs and/or for compulsory courses.

Unspecified credit – credit which is granted when an exact or near exact equivalence cannot be demonstrated. Unspecified credit is also granted for elective courses.

UQ - The University of Queensland.

3. Procedures Scope/Coverage

These procedures apply to all students at The University of Queensland and all programs offered at The University of Queensland.

4. Procedures Statement

Faculties, by virtue of their responsibility to manage degree programs:

- receive applications for credit transfer or exemption, including applications for recognition of both formal studies and informal studies (RPL);
- assess and calculate applications in a timely manner; and
• notify students of the outcome of their applications in a timely manner.

In so doing, faculties are responsible for the:

• maintenance and publication of the faculty guidelines that outline a uniformly flexible, consistent and equitable approach to the assessment of credit transfer and exemption;
• regular review of faculty guidelines with respect to consistency, equity and preservation of standards.

University policy and procedures, and faculty guidelines and procedures on credit for previous studies and recognition of prior learning must be widely publicised for the information of prospective and continuing students.

5. Description

5.1 Admission

PPL 3.40.06 Undergraduate, Non-Award and CSP Admissions [7] makes adequate provision, through the application of standard QTAC® [12] schedules, to use formal studies and RPL to assess entry ranks for applicants and to determine that prerequisites are met. Likewise, the program rules for many postgraduate coursework programs make provision for prior studies, experience and informal learning to be used as the basis for admission.

Where a completed award has been used to satisfy the entry requirements for admission to a program, the associate dean (academic) may determine that no credit will be granted from that award towards the higher qualification.

5.2 Credit transfer

5.2.1 Where credit is transferred to a program, a number of units up to a specified limit, may be granted towards a UQ award, on the basis of either previous formal or informal learning.

5.2.2 The type of credit transfer granted should depend on the program rules and structure of an individual program. The type/s of credit transfer granted for individual programs must be outlined in faculty guidelines and include specified, unspecified or block credit.

5.2.3 Where ever possible, specified credit should be granted.

5.2.4 Block credit should usually only be granted in cases of formal articulation agreements.

5.2.5 The University does not grant transfer credit for grades of 3 (or equivalent).

5.2.6 On the basis of the formal articulation agreement between the University and TAFE Queensland [13], students with an AQF Diploma or Advanced Diploma award may be granted credit for studies successfully completed, normally within the last five years, towards a UQ degree program in the same or a directly-relevant discipline area. The amount of credit to be granted would be up to a maximum of 16 units for a 1.5 year full-time or equivalent AQF Diploma, and up to a maximum of 24 units for a two-year, full-time AQF Advanced Diploma. Each application will be assessed on the basis of the duration of the previous study, when the study was completed, subject content, the manner of assessment and the proposed UQ degree program.
5.2.7 The maximum amount of credit that can be given may only be granted where the prior study is considered to have a very high degree of overlap with the content of the bachelor degree (as assessed by mapping of program and course content). Standard allocation of credit would be in the order of 8 units for an AQF Diploma, and 16 units for an AQF Advanced Diploma.

5.2.8 An allocation of “block credit” will normally be made (depending on the program) or, where course mapping is available, specified credit. Where performance-level assessment is available for the relevant TAFE courses, this can assist in allocating credit.

5.2.9 The University does not grant graded credit for external courses. Where program rules specify that graded credit is required for transfer between UQ programs, or the program rules require graded credit for calculation of the class of honours, the grades for the credit awarded will be used.

5.3 Exemption

The granting of an exemption on the basis of formal or informal learning does not reduce the number of units required to complete a student’s program but rather, allows prior formal or informal learning to be recognised as a substitute for a course or courses listed in the program requirements.

An exemption from undertaking a course or courses may be granted when a student:

- is required to undertake a substantially similar course at a postgraduate level that had already been completed at the undergraduate level; or
- completed a substantially similar course in another faculty or as part of a dual degree; or
- undertook similar studies as part of a sub-bachelor level program or as a Year 12 student and credit was not granted; or
- is granted permission by the associate dean (academic) to undertake another course as a substitute under the provisions of PPL 3.40.10 Program Rules and Requirements.

5.4 Consideration of Recognised Prior Learning (RPL)

5.4.1 Principles underpinning RPL

RPL may be used to grant credit for the purposes of credit transfer, admission or exemption. Faculties must apply the following principles when granting credit using RPL:

- granting credit for RPL will be considered only when proof of experience equivalent to a UQ course can be demonstrated;
- the prior learning must be relevant, current and equivalent to the learning required for the UQ course and program;
- total credit granted, including that granted for formal learning, must comply with section 5.5 of these procedures;
- information about RPL should be readily available to prospective applicants and should include a clear statement of the learning or competency outcomes that will be applied in assessing RPL applications;
- assessment of RPL must be consistent and equitable for all students; and
- acceptable quality assurance principles must be applied to ensure that the prior learning is of an appropriate standard to permit consideration for admission, credit transfer or exemption.

5.4.2 Assessment of RPL
Assessment of RPL must fulfil the same criteria that are associated with assessment of learning outcomes in any conventional course: that is, assessment must be valid, current, sufficient, reliable and authentic.

Assessment will be the responsibility of the faculty. Assessment will depend on the discipline and nature of the program of study. RPL could include:

- relevant professional training;
- project work;
- practice related learning;
- independent research;
- capstone experiences;
- a piece of scholarship;
- a portfolio containing a range of supporting materials and evidence;
- work-based assessments;
- examinations;
- interviews;
- demonstrations; or
- a combination of the above.

5.5 Credit for other study

5.5.1 The associate dean (academic) must grant credit for a course in a program if —

(a) the student applies for credit on first enrolling in the program; and

(b) the associate dean (academic) is satisfied —

I. the student has a grade of 4 (or P) in a comparable course; and

II. the academic standards of the program will not be lowered; and

(c) total credit granted to the student will not exceed a maximum set by the program rules.

5.5.2 Despite 5.5.1 (b), the associate dean (academic) may grant credit for a postgraduate course only if the comparable course is a postgraduate course.

5.5.3 When a student has been granted credit —

(a) on first enrolling in a program; and

(b) for work undertaken in a previous program; and

(c) the work has not been credited to a completed award,

credit for that work cannot be credited towards the previous program.

5.5.4 In administering a “maximum credit for other study” rule in program rules, courses completed in the suite will be treated as study completed while enrolled in the program.

5.5.5 Maximum credit

5.5.5.1 A student must get one-third of the units required for an award —
(a) by studies undertaken at the University; and

(b) in courses not credited towards another completed award.

However, "completed award" does not include an award that is surrendered.

5.5.5.2 The following table can be used in the application of 5.5.5.1:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program requirements, (units)</th>
<th>Limit of credit per 5.5.1 (units)</th>
<th>Limit of credit rounded down to nearest even unit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>5.33</td>
<td>4 units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>10.67</td>
<td>10 units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>16.00</td>
<td>16 units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>21.33</td>
<td>20 units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>26.67</td>
<td>26 units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>32.00</td>
<td>32 units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64</td>
<td>42.67</td>
<td>42 units</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.5.5.3 The credit granted to a student holding more than one award must be no more than the maximum available for the best. "The best" means the award held by the student for which the most credit is available.

5.5.5.4 Section 5.5.5.1 and 5.5.5.3 override any program rule.

5.5.6 Credit for other study – dual program

5.5.6.1 Subject to section 5.4.2, a student undertaking a dual program may get credit for a previously completed award, if —

(a) the associate dean (academic) approves; and

(b) the credit sought is no more than one-third of the total units required by the student to complete the dual program.
5.5.6.2 Section 5.5.6.1 overrides any program rule.

**5.5.7 Credit for other study while undertaking a concurrent diploma**

5.5.7.1 Despite 5.5.1, if a student who applies for credit for a course that the student has already completed (the completed course) is enrolled concurrently in —

(a) a program for an undergraduate degree, or a dual program; and

(b) a program for an undergraduate diploma;

the associate dean (academic) may grant credit for the completed course towards only one of the programs in which the student is enrolled.

Example —

A student completes a course in international relations at University A. The student later enrolls concurrently in the programs for the Bachelor of Arts and the Diploma in Languages offered by the University of Queensland (the UQ programs). Even if the associate dean (academic) is satisfied that under PPL 3.50.03 they could grant credit for the course in international relations towards both of the UQ programs, the associate dean (academic) may grant credit for the international relations course towards only one of the UQ programs, not both.

**5.5.8 Cancellation of credit**

5.5.8.1 If counting credit towards a current program, including credit for previous study, would mean that more than the credit cancellation period will elapse between the start of the study for which credit is to be counted and the expected time for completion of the current program, an associate dean (academic) may —

(a) cancel credit for a course; or

(b) cancel credit granted for a completed award; or

(c) determine conditions under which the student may retain credit.

5.5.8.2 A program rule may specify the “credit cancellation period”, otherwise it is —

(a) for a graduate certificate — three years; or

(b) for a graduate diploma — five years; or

(c) for a coursework master — seven years; or

(d) for other programs — ten years.

5.5.8.3 An associate dean (academic) may only cancel credit under 5.5.8 if —

(a) the program contains no comparable course; or

(b) the course was passed or the award gained so long ago that the student is unlikely to be able to continue the current program satisfactorily without undertaking further work.
6. Administrative Procedures

6.1 Decision makers

The associate dean (academic) administering the program in which the student is enrolled makes decisions on:

- the granting of credit transfer/exemption for both formal and informal learning; and
- unless otherwise stipulated in PPL 3.40.06 Undergraduate, Non-Award and CSP Admissions [7], whether admission requirements have been satisfied on the basis of formal or informal learning.

No officer of the University has the power to rescind the granting of credit or an exemption (refer section 9).

6.2 Assessment of applications from students

Faculties may assess applications from students, including prospective students, for credit transfer and exemption. Faculty guidelines and procedures may include the delegation of credit assessment to their schools.

In the case of commencing international students, faculties may delegate responsibility to assess transfer credit to the International Admissions Section.

6.3 Lodgement of applications

All applications for credit or exemption should be completed using the University's application form [5].

Applications should be submitted to the relevant faculty office. Incomplete applications may be rejected.

6.4 Supporting documentation

UQ students need not submit additional documentation if the prior formal learning for which they are seeking credit transfer or exemption is from a UQ program. Students who transfer to UQ from another institution or who request credit transfer or exemption based on RPL must also supply:

- up-to-date, official academic records/transcripts. Evidence should be in the form of original documents, or copies certified true by the issuing institution, a Justice of the Peace, or a Commissioner for Declarations; and
- a certified detailed description of the course or courses (extended syllabus with a week-by-week list of topics covered in each course, aims and objectives, contact hours, texts and references, and methods of assessment/grading criteria) for required supporting documentation for credit or exemption based on RPL, see Section 5.4.2 – Assessment of RPL.

6.5 Submission of applications and notification of outcome

Applications for credit transfer or exemption should be submitted as soon as necessary documentation is complete, but no later than the enrolment closing date for new enrolments for the semester in which the award of credit transfer or exemption may affect the student’s program of study.
Faculties notify students of the outcome of their application as soon as practicable, but no later than four weeks after lodgement of a complete application. For this purpose, a notation is placed on a student’s Academic Record, which is accessible via mySI-net [15].

Students must be formally notified of the outcome of their application. Notification may be provided either electronically or via a formal letter from a faculty or the International Admissions Section.

7. Requirements for International Students

7.1 Applications for credit transfer or exemption should be submitted as soon as necessary documentation is complete, but no later than the enrolment closing date for new enrolments for the semester in which the award of credit may affect the student’s program of study.

7.2 Faculties will inform the Visa Officer, Student Centre of final decisions on credit for international students no later than the beginning of the second week of classes of the student's first semester of enrolment to enable the transmission of this data to the Department of Immigration and Border Protection by the end of the second week of semester.

7.3 By the end of the second week of semester, the faculty will send a letter to international students informing them of their final credit status. This must be signed by the student and returned to the faculty, in order to comply with the regulations of the ESOS Act. This letter should be retained on the central student file.

7.4 Credit transfer granted after this time, which leads to a shortening of the student's program, should be reported to the Visa Officer in the Student Centre for appropriate action.

8. University and Faculty Responsibilities

8.1 General

The University should:

- maintain the UQ Credit Precedent Database [6]; and
- regularly audit credit transfer processes, precedents and decisions, involving both formal and informal prior learning.

Faculties should:

- demonstrate that the recognised prior learning justifies entry to the program of study;
- be able to demonstrate that AQF learning outcomes requirements have been met when credit has been awarded;
- establish procedures to ensure timely consideration of applications, including a maximum turnaround time for consideration of the application and notification to the applicant;
- receive and assess applications for credit transfer/exemption including those for RPL;
- while taking into account relevant program requirements and rules, grant credit transfer for work already undertaken of a comparable standard to enable the student to complete the program in a minimum time;
- wherever possible, grant credit in the form of specified credit;
- record the credit transfer or exemption on the student's official academic transcript;
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- record precedents in the UQ Credit Precedent Database to ensure a transparent, equitable and consistent treatment of all applications;
- keep adequate records of applications and decisions;
- advise UQ International of credit transfer granted to international students; and
- forward the original application for credit transfer (including credit for RPL) and exemption, including all supporting documentation to CRM and Records Management.

8.2 Articulation of policies and requirements

Faculties should:

- ensure that credit transfer guidelines and credit transfer precedents are regularly reviewed, transparent and readily accessible by students and staff;
- provide a clear statement of the learning or competency outcomes that will be applied to assessing RPL applications and of quality assurance procedures; and
- publish widely (preferably in “handbook” format and on the web):
  - restrictions and limitation on credit transfer (e.g. time limits; consideration of credit for informal prior learning);
  - information on the criteria used and matters taken into account when applications are being assessed;
  - details of documentation required in support of applications for credit transfer or exemption;
  - indication that eligibility for credit transfer or exemption does not guarantee a place in a program;
  - clearly articulated information on the type and extent of credit transfer that may be granted by the faculty for each of its programs/courses in accordance with University rules and policies.

8.3 Monitoring of decisions and review of policy

Faculties should:

- audit every three years credit transfer precedents and decisions on credit transfer/exemption including that for RPL;
- review regularly the validity and equity of faculty guidelines and criteria for the assessment of applications for credit transfer/exemption including that for RPL in light of approved University policy and, where appropriate, establish new criteria;
- record the progress of students who have been granted credit transfer, to help ensure equity and consistency in decision making; and
- maintain a credit precedent database including the:
  - name of the institution whose courses have been assessed for credit transfer;
  - year in which the course was completed;
  - year in which credit transfer was granted;
  - name of the academic staff member who performed the assessment; and
  - name and student number (if applicable) of the student;
- provide details of credit assessment to students, academic advisers, the International Admissions Section and to other institutions. In doing so, faculties must indicate that the assessments are indicative/advisory and that only a formal, individualised determination from the faculty will have any binding force; and
- report regularly to the Academic Board, via the Committee for Academic Programs Policy, on the application of the University policy.
9. Rescinding of Credit

Once a decision has been made to grant credit or an exemption, no officer of the University can rescind the decision in the absence of a patent error or fraud.

10. Related Rules and Legislation

- ESOS ACT [4]

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