University Policy on: Credit Transfer, Advanced Standing and Recognition of Prior Learning

Purpose of the policy and summary of issues it addresses:
This policy deals with the recognition of prior learning and the granting of advanced standing through the transfer of credit.

The purpose of the policy is to –

assist prospective students to evaluate the extent of advanced standing they may receive on admission to a course at The University of Western Australia for which they may be eligible;

assist academic staff to evaluate the extent of advanced standing that may be appropriate in an individual case; and

in the context of maintaining academic standards at The University of Western Australia at the highest international levels,

• facilitate students’ movement between institutions and between courses; and

• enable students to complete award courses with maximum efficiency by using and building upon knowledge that has been gained from previous formal studies and prior learning.

Definitions:

In this policy,

advanced standing means authority to commence a course with credit granted for components of the course in recognition of previously completed formal study or prior learning;

credit transfer means the process of granting credit for a unit or units, up to a specified limit towards an award course of The University of Western Australia on the basis of previous formal studies or prior learning;

faculty or other body responsible for a course includes a body or person to whom the Faculty or other body has delegated responsibility for a function;

previous formal studies means studies undertaken at the University or another higher education institution recognised by the University;

prior learning in the context of recognised prior learning (RPL) means -
(a) learning acquired in a credentialed context (that is one that is qualified through assessment) other than in a University or other higher education institution; or
(b) learning acquired in an uncredentialed context such as through work experience or life experience.

RPL means recognised prior learning;

1 For example a course offered by a professional body, or a private educational institution.
Policy statement:

1 General Principles

1.1 Within the context of maintaining academic standards at the highest international levels, and subject to the provisions of this policy, the University

- enables students to complete award courses with maximum efficiency; and
- facilitates students’ movement between institutions and between courses,

by giving appropriate recognition to previous formal studies and prior learning for the purpose of admission to a course, including satisfying prerequisites, or the granting of credit or advanced standing in a course.

1.2 The University states, if possible,

- whether previous formal studies and prior learning are taken into account for the purpose of determining eligibility for admission to a course, or for ranking of applicants or the satisfaction of prerequisites; and
- the amount of credit that can be expected in a course for previous formal studies or prior learning.

1.3 A faculty or other body responsible for a course may recognise previous formal studies or prior learning for the purpose of determining eligibility for admission to the course or satisfying prerequisites or the granting of credit or advanced standing in the course.

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2 The University supports the principles in the Universities Australia Policy Guidelines on Cross-Sector Qualification Linkages and the provision of Education to International Students Code of Practice and Guidelines for Australian Universities and is a party to the Group of Eight Credit Transfer Agreement. (Insert links) check to ensure that UWA does support all of these.

3 The Regulations for Admission and Transfer to Undergraduate Award Courses make provision through the application of standard schedules for formal studies and prior learning to be used in the assessment and ranking of applicants for admission to such courses and to determine the satisfaction of prerequisites. Faculty rules make provision for formal studies and prior learning to be used in the assessment and, where relevant, the ranking of applicants for admission to postgraduate courses.
1.4 Credit may be granted towards a course within the limits permitted (See 4) where the faculty or other body responsible for the course is satisfied

- that the work previously completed by the student was of the appropriate level and completed at the appropriate standard;
- in the case of specified credit, that the student’s previous formal studies or prior learning satisfy the objectives or learning outcomes of one or more units of the student’s current course of study; and,
- where relevant, that the knowledge gained by the student is current.

1.5 Where credit is granted towards a course, students must meet all requirements of the course in accordance with the rules for the course.

1.6 Information about RPL must be made available to prospective applicants and must include a clear statement of the learning or competency outcomes that will be applied in assessing applications for recognition of prior learning.

1.7 Credit granted towards a course may be in the form of

- specified credit, where a student’s previous formal studies or prior learning are assessed as satisfying the objectives or learning outcomes of a specific unit; or
- unspecified credit, where a student’s previous formal studies or prior learning are assessed as being at an appropriate level and of an appropriate standard to satisfy the requirements of an elective unit; or
- block credit, or articulation credit, where the student’s previous formal studies are judged to be equivalent to a substantial part of a given course.

1.7.1 Block credit or articulation credit for formal studies completed in another institution is granted only where a formal institutional agreement is in place.

1.8 Wherever possible credit is given as specified credit.

1.9 Credit granted is provisional until all prescribed administrative requirements are met by the student including submission of original documentation providing evidence of satisfactory completion of the formal studies or previous learning on the basis of which credit is sought.

1.10 Unspecified credit and credit granted on the basis of learning completed other than at the University do not contribute to any grade point average (GPA) or weighted average mark (WAM) calculation.

4 Details of approved block credit and articulation agreements are set out at web address
2 Applications for credit transfer

2.1 Students seeking credit transfer are required to submit an application except if they are transferring between one course of the University and another and the unit for which they are seeking credit is the same version as the unit in the new course.

2.2 Students can apply for credit transfer either with their application for admission to the University or at any later time during their studies.

2.3 An application for credit transfer cannot be made before an application for admission.

### Procedures

**Applications**

If an application for credit transfer is required, it must be made using the University’s application form at the web address. Applications must be submitted to Student Administration or direct to the relevant faculty office and be accompanied by supporting documentation where relevant.

Supporting documentation is not required if the previous formal studies for which a student is seeking credit were completed at the University.

Students transferring to the University from another institution who request advanced standing or credit transfer must provide:

- up-to-date, official academic records or transcripts; and

- a certified, detailed description of the unit(s), equivalent to a unit outline at the University for each unit (extended syllabus with a week-by-week list of topics covered, aims and objectives, contact hours, texts and references, and methods of assessment/grading criteria).

Any academic records or transcripts provided that are not originals must be certified true copies. See web address for positions or bodies authorised to certify documents as true copies. If certified copies are provided, any decision on credit transfer or advanced standing is subject to sighting original documents.

Incomplete applications may be rejected.

Applications for advanced standing or credit transfer must be submitted as soon as necessary documentation is complete, but no later than the enrolment closing date for new enrolments for the teaching period in which the approval of credit transfer or advanced standing may affect the student’s enrolment.

3 Assessing applications for credit transfer
3.1 General principles for assessing applications

3.1.1 Except in the case of block credit or articulation credit, each application for credit transfer is considered on its merits.

3.1.2 Determinations on credit transfer applications are made at the most appropriate academic level.

3.1.3 A credit transfer application is assessed in conjunction with an identified course of study.

3.1.4 Applications for credit are assessed having regard to

- the content and level of the work for which credit transfer is sought;
- the standard at which work was completed;
- the learning outcomes achieved;
- where appropriate, the currency of knowledge gained;
- the rules of the course towards which the credit is sought; and
- the limits on credit transfer permitted.

3.1.5 Assessment of applications must be systematic, evidence-based, transparent, and reliable.

3.1.6 Every effort must be made to ensure that assessment of applications is consistent and equitable for all students.

3.2 Assessing applications made on the basis of prior learning

3.2.1 Criteria for assessing outcomes of prior learning must be the same as those for assessing learning outcomes of previous formal studies.

3.2.2 Acceptable quality assurance principles must be applied to ensure that prior learning is of an appropriate standard.

3.2.3 Granting credit for uncredentialed prior learning is considered only if proof of experience equivalent to a unit offered by the University can be demonstrated.

3.2.4 Credit or advanced standing cannot be approved in a postgraduate course on the basis of work experience or life experience.

3.2.5 Credit or advanced standing cannot be approved in a postgraduate course for undergraduate units other than Level 4 units.
Procedures

Assessing applications
Applications are assessed in conjunction with an identified course of study.

Applications must be considered on a case by case basis taking into account the student's individual circumstances, award course and documentation provided.

All applications are assessed in the first instance against the University’s credit precedent lists. (Link?)

Decisions recorded in the credit precedent list about specified credit granted with respect to a particular unit or unspecified credit granted on the basis of previous formal studies or prior learning must be applied consistently.

Credit transfer or advanced standing approved in previous formal studies cannot form the basis of a request for credit transfer to the student's current course.

Where the basis for credit is formal learning from an approved institution, credit is granted only on the basis of original evidence of successful completion with a grade equivalent to a grade of pass or higher at the University. An appropriate assessment must be made to meet the intent of this requirement.

Approved domestic institutions are those listed with the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) Register of Recognised Education Institutions and Authorised Accreditation Authorities Australia.

International institutions and qualifications are assessed on a case by case basis using recognised resources for the assessment of international qualifications

Consideration must be given to whether an applicant’s knowledge in the field is suitably current or has become dated, for example by changes in practice or technology.

Credit transfer and advanced standing may be approved on the basis of uncredentialed prior learning if appropriate evidence is provided.

Credit transfer or advanced standing must not be granted in postgraduate courses on the basis of work experience or life experience although these may be taken into account in assessing whether or not an applicant meets the admission criteria.

Assessment of prior learning may rely on –

- a portfolio containing a range of supporting material and evidence;
- work based assessments;
- examinations;
- projects;
- interviews;
- demonstrations; or
- some combination of the above.
4 Limits on credit

Credit for completed courses

4.1 Except in the case described in 4.2, the maximum value of credit that can be granted towards a course of the University with a value of eight units or more on the basis of study undertaken in a course that was previously completed is 50 per cent of the value of the course towards which the credit is granted.

4.2 Credit may be granted for all units completed in an articulating course.

4.3 Credit cannot be granted towards a course with a value of four units on the basis of study undertaken in a course that was completed.

Credit for incomplete courses

4.4 There is no limit on the value of credit that may be transferred in the case of a student transferring from one course of the University to another course of the same level provided the student satisfies the rules of the course into which they are transferring.

4.5 The maximum value of credit that may be granted towards a course on the basis of study undertaken in an incomplete course, except in the cases described in 4.4 and 4.6, is 50 percent of the value of the course towards which the credit is granted.

Block credit or articulation agreements

4.6 A formal institutional agreement may provide for credit to be granted towards a course with a value greater than 16 units up to a limit that ensures the student completes at least eight units of the highest levels required for the course including all units of the highest level of any major required.

5 Recording decisions

5.1 Credit precedent list

5.1.1 A credit precedent records a credit transfer decision with the aim of applying that decision to subsequent comparable cases.

5.1.2 All decisions on credit transfer that are to be used as precedents, including those of non-approval, must be recorded in a credit precedent list.

5 See section 8 in this policy.
5.1.3 The purpose of a credit precedent list is

- to aid consistency and efficiency of decision-making; and
- to assist prospective students to assess the amount of credit, if any, that they are likely to receive on admission to an award course of the University.
Procedures

Credit Precedent List

The following decisions, including those of non-approval, must be recorded in the credit precedent list if they are to be used as precedents:

- decisions relating to credit transfer applications based on assessments of previous formal studies
- decisions relating to credit transfer applications based on assessments of prior learning
- all advanced standing decisions based on negotiated formal arrangements with other institutions
- all proposals for formal advanced standing arrangements with other institutions that have not been approved

A credit precedent must include, in the case of individual units:
- the name of the institution whose units have been assessed for credit transfer
- the year in which the unit was completed
- the year in which credit transfer was granted or refused
- the name of the staff member who performed the assessment

A credit precedent must include, in the case of a formal advanced standing proposal:
- the name of the institution whose units have been assessed for credit transfer
- the year in which the advanced standing arrangement was approved or rejected
- the name of the body that performed the assessment

To ensure that the credit precedent list remains soundly based academically, entries must include a time limit on validity of decisions.

The credit precedent list must be consulted in relation to any advanced standing or credit transfer applications.

Decisions included in the credit precedent list on specified credit for individual units must be applied consistently across the University.

Note: Because of the unstructured and highly variable nature of uncredentialed learning, this type of application cannot be the subject of any precedents: care nevertheless must be taken by decision makers to maintain consistency over student/course cohorts.

5.2 Student records
5.2.1 All approvals of advanced standing and credit transfer must be reported to the Registrar.

**Procedure**

A faculty or other body responsible for considering applications for advanced standing or credit transfer must

- advise Student Administration of approved advanced standing and credit transfer for recording on the student's official academic transcript;
- ensure that adequate records are kept of applications and decisions by forwarding the original applications and supporting documentation and copies of decisions to Archives and Records Management Services;
- advise the International Centre of advanced standing and credit transfer granted to international students.

**Procedures**

**Academic records**

The status recorded for specified or unspecified credit on the basis of learning completed other than at the University is “Exempt” and this does not contribute to any grade point average (GPA) or weighted average mark (WAM) calculation.

Block credit for formal studies completed in another institution is granted as a specific number of credit points or units.

If a student is transferring between one course of the University and another and a unit that they have previously completed is the same version as a unit in the new course, and is credited towards the new course, the mark and grade achieved contribute to any grade point average (GPA) or weighted average mark (WAM) calculation.

If a student transferring between one course of the University and another seeks to have a unit that they have previously completed credited towards the new course and it is a different version from that in the new course, an application to transfer credit is required. The status recorded for the unit is “Exempt” and it does not contribute to any grade point average (GPA) or weighted average mark (WAM) calculation.

6 Notifying students of decisions

6.1 Students are notified of the outcome of their application as soon as practicable, but no later than four weeks after lodgement of a complete application.
7 Appeals process

7.1 An appeals process is available for students who are dissatisfied with the outcome of an application for credit.

Procedures

8 Block credit or articulation agreements with other institutions

8.1 Any block credit agreement that sets out the extent of credit to be granted to all students holding a particular qualification or having
completed a particular course of study must be submitted to the Academic Council for approval.

8.2 Any block credit agreement that is proposed for or includes international students and is based on study at an institution other than the University, must be submitted first to the Director of the International Centre.\(^6\)

9 Review of block credit or articulation agreements with other institutions

9.1 All block credit or articulation agreements with other institutions must be reviewed regularly and at least once every three years\(^7\).

9.2 A report on the review must be submitted to Academic Council, together with a request to renew the agreement, where appropriate.

Procedures

10 Requirement to report on application of policy

10.1 A faculty or board responsible for implementing this policy must report regularly to the Academic Board on the application of the policy.

Procedures

A faculty or board responsible for implementing this policy must regularly audit credit transfer processes, precedents and decisions, involving both formal and informal prior learning.

\(^6\) By Academic Council R126/08, the delegated authority to approve such articulation and associated advanced standing arrangements was given to the Chair of the Academic Board on the recommendation of the Director, International Centre and in consultation as appropriate with the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education). Details of the policy and procedures are available at [http://www.international.uwa.edu.au/staff/agreements](http://www.international.uwa.edu.au/staff/agreements)

\(^7\) Currently every five years.
Procedures

Responsibilities of the boards of studies and faculties

The boards of studies and faculties must

- establish procedures to ensure timely consideration of applications including a maximum turnaround time of four weeks for consideration of the application and notification to the applicant;

- provide a clear statement of the learning or competency outcomes that will be applied to assessing RPL applications and of quality assurance procedures;

- record the progress of students who have been granted credit transfer to help ensure equity and consistency in decision-making;

publish widely (preferably in “handbook” format and on the web) clearly articulated information on the type and extent of advanced standing and credit transfer that may be granted for each of its course/units in accordance with University rules and policies restrictions and limitations on credit transfer (eg 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 advanced standing and credit transfer, and advice that eligibility for advanced standing or credit transfer does not guarantee a place in a course. review regularly the validity and equity of guidelines and criteria for the assessment of applications for credit transfer including that for RPL in light of approved University policy and

Schedule 1  Approved Articulation Agreements

Schedule 2  Maximum Credit Available

Block credit example

Related forms: (Link)
Application for credit transfer
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**Related Policies or legislation:**
- Student Rules
- Faculty Rules
- Undergraduate Degree Rules
- AVCC Policy Guidelines on Cross-Sector Qualification Linkages
- Group of Eight Credit Transfer Agreement March 2007