

GUIDELINES FOR THE GRANTING OF CREDIT

Approved by Academic Board 16 May 2007 and amended 18 July 2007

1. Preamble

Australian Catholic University (ACU National) recognises the validity of granting credit for relevant prior study and learning, as reflected in the relevant provisions of the Academic Regulations and in the Policy on Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL).

The concept is further illustrated by the establishment of specific dual degree pathways, whereby students complete two nominated awards within appropriate pre-arranged cross-crediting provisions. An extension of this principle applies to cross-crediting between courses for which such structured arrangements have not been established, but where the relevance of some units warrants their crediting towards a second award.

Credit may be granted not only for other study at ACU National, but also for study at other universities and other education providers as well other learning on the basis of RPL. The Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) *National Principles and Operational Guidelines for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)* (2004) and the *National Guidelines on Cross-Sectoral Qualification Linkages* (2002) provide guidance on credit transfer and articulation agreements and arrangements within and between sectors.

2. Guidelines subject to Academic Regulations

Determinations under these Guidelines must at all times be subject to the overriding provisions of the Academic Regulations.

3. Principles

3.1 *Equivalence of study*

- 3.1.1 When considering an application for credit, consideration must be given to the standing of the institution and the quality, level, content and learning outcomes of the prior study or learning to which the application relates.
- 3.1.2 Specified credit may only be given if the content, level and learning outcomes of the unit for which credit is sought are substantially equivalent to a unit within the course in which the student is enrolled.
- 3.1.3 Unspecified credit may only be given if the level and scope of study and learning outcomes of the study for which credit is sought are similar or equivalent to a unit or units within the course in which the student is enrolled.
- 3.1.4 The AQF provides an agreed framework for designing, developing and issuing recognised qualifications within Australia and for supporting linkages between these qualifications. Under the AQF, each qualification Guideline provides for an RPL pathway as an 'alternative' or 'non-institutional' access point or source of credit. These Guidelines provide a valuable point of reference in consideration of equivalence of study or prior learning when evaluating applications for credit.

3.2. Granting of credit

- 3.2.1 The maximum allowable credit provisions of the Academic Regulations (2007 Regulation 4.7.3) apply specifically where a student seeks credit on the basis of a prior completed qualification(s).
- 3.2.2 Where a student has undertaken prior relevant and equivalent study or learning but has not completed the qualification concerned, or has completed a unit(s) superfluous to the requirements of the completed qualification, the 'maximum allowable credit' provisions (2007 Regulation 4.7.3) specific to prior completed qualifications do not apply. However, the 'minimum level of studies required for an award of this University' (2007 Regulation 4.7.4) continue to apply.
- 3.2.3 When granting credit, consideration should also be given to the structure of the course towards which credit is sought.

3.3 Limits on study from which credit may be granted

- 3.3.1 Unless a course has been specifically established as an entry pathway (eg UniAccess programs), no credit can be granted towards any course for any unit or study which was part of the qualification used to gain entry to the course.
- 3.3.2 No credit can be granted towards a postgraduate course (graduate certificate or higher) on the basis of undergraduate studies, irrespective of whether the undergraduate study was a prerequisite for entry to the course.
- 3.3.3 A student undertaking a graduate entry bachelor degree may be granted credit for prior undergraduate study, excluding any study required for the qualification used to gain entry to the graduate entry bachelor degree.
- 3.3.4 If a student has previously completed a compulsory unit (or its equivalent) in a qualification which was used to gain entry to the course, the student may be exempted from the nominated compulsory unit but will be required to complete another unit in its stead.
- 3.3.5 Credit will not normally be granted towards a master's degree on the basis of study in a graduate certificate or graduate diploma course which does not have as its prerequisite prior study in the relevant discipline.

3.4 Articulated suite of courses

Subject to the relevant course rules, a student may progress through a suite of articulated ACU National courses (eg graduate certificate, graduate diploma and coursework master's degree) with full credit for units completed in the lower level course(s) in that suite.

Other postgraduate course combinations¹ may be treated in the same way as an articulated suite of courses, subject to the approval of the relevant Dean(s). Details of any such crediting arrangements will be published in the relevant Course Enrolment Guides.

¹ Examples include –

- (a) Graduate Certificate in Religious Education and Graduate Diploma in Education (Secondary);
- (b) Graduate Certificate in Education Law, which has been approved to articulate with the Master of Education with 40 cp credit.

3.5 *Arrangements re credit when course revised*

When a course structure is revised, commencing students will enrol in accordance with the new course structure from the effective date of implementation. Transitional arrangements for existing students will be clearly specified as part of the course review proposal. Wherever possible, continuing students should move to the 'new' course structure as early as possible, and a flexible approach should be adopted in relation to recognition of and granting credit for studies already completed under the previous course structure.

4. Provision of advice regarding eligibility for credit

The Course Co-ordinator will provide advice to students/prospective applicants concerning RPL and credit processes and on formulation of their application.

A prospective applicant may complete the required application in advance of gaining admission to a course. On receipt of such application and all relevant documentary evidence, a Course Co-ordinator will advise a student regarding his/her eligibility for credit if granted admission to a course. However, eligibility for credit does not guarantee a place in any course for which credit may be approved.