# Recognition of Formal Learning Procedure

# Section 1 - Document Context

(1) This procedure supports the implementation of the Credit and Recognition of Prior Learning Policy and must be read in conjunction with that document.

(2) The University of Newcastle (University) recognises prior learning, including formal learning undertaken by students.

### Purpose

(3) This document outlines the requirements for assessing applications for the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) for formal learning and the granting of credit.

### Scope

(4) This procedure applies to the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) for students enrolled in:

a. enabling programs;
b. undergraduate and postgraduate coursework programs; and
c. coursework programs offered by the University to students studying in Australia and offshore, including those in which students enrol through a partner institution.

### Audience

(5) This document must be read and understood by staff responsible for administering credit applications, and students submitting applications for credit on the basis of formal learning.

### Definitions

(6) In the context of this document:

| Defined Term | Meaning |
|---|---|
| Authorised Officer | means the staff member with responsibility for processing the credit applications and corresponding outcomes for students. |
| Appeal Officer | means a staff member who has delegated authority to consider and determine the outcome of an appeal of an academic decision relating to credit. |

# Section 2 - Recognition of Formal Learning

### Principles

(7) Recognition of formal learning must be in accordance with the Credit and Recognition of Prior Learning Policy.

(8) Credit for formal learning may be granted for:

a. studies undertaken at an appropriate level within an AQF program, or a program assessed to be equivalent to an AQF program; or
b. a set of stacked micro-credentials.

(9) Prior formal learning must demonstrate comparable or equivalent:

a. learning outcomes;
b. volume of learning;
c. content; and
d. learning and assessment approaches.

(10) Where undertaken at an appropriate academic level, credit may be granted for formal learning completed at:

a. Australian higher education institutions;
b. recognised overseas tertiary institutions;
c. registered Australian private providers of accredited tertiary education courses; and
d. registered Australian Education and Training providers.

## Eligibility for Credit

(11) Credit may only be granted for formal learning completed with passing grades (or equivalent).

(12) Credit for formal learning will not be granted on the basis of:

a. courses with the following results:
    i. terminating pass (or equivalent); or
    ii. conceded pass (or equivalent); or
    iii. incomplete, special circumstances or withdrawn without academic penalty (or equivalent); or
    iv. fail grade, including withdrawn fail.
b. courses completed at another institution where that completion is due to credit or recognition of prior learning;
c. completed qualifications equivalent to AQF Level 3 or below;
d. completed qualifications equivalent to AQF Level 4, except where an articulation arrangement has been approved by the PCAC;
e. Certificates of Participation or Statements of Attainment, unless undertaken in an AQF compliant or a non-AQF compliant program as per clause 8;
f. incomplete AQF Diplomas or Advanced Diplomas which were undertaken at a VET or private provider; or
g. any course that is substantially equivalent to one that the student has previously counted towards the same award.

(13) Multiple previous courses may be assessed in combination to determine if the learning outcomes for the course for which credit is sought have been met.

(14) Credit for formal learning may be granted for identical courses undertaken at the University that:

a. count towards the target program, including any identified equivalent courses that form part of a Program and Course Approval Committee (PCAC) approved transition arrangement for the program;
b. do not exceed any limitations as set out in the Program-Based Credit Limits and Currency.

(15) Credit for completed undergraduate courses will not be granted for postgraduate programs, except where:

a. the undergraduate course(s) are explicitly included in the postgraduate program;
b. a University of Newcastle undergraduate course is co-badged with a postgraduate course, in which case credit will be granted towards the postgraduate course; or
c. the undergraduate qualification is included as an admission pathway that provides a reduction in the volume of learning required for the postgraduate program.

# Section 3 - Cross-Institutional Credit

### Eligibility

(16) Undergraduate and postgraduate students who have successfully completed a minimum of 40 units of their program at the University of Newcastle may apply to undertake cross-institutional study.

(17) Students who have been granted the maximum credit into their program at the University of Newcastle will be ineligible to undertake cross-institutional study.

(18) International students on articulation arrangements will not be permitted to undertake cross-institutional study.

### Application and Assessment

(19) Students must complete the cross-institutional application process and be granted permission from the University of Newcastle prior to completing cross-institutional study at another institution.

(20) Students will be required to pay the cross-institutional application fee as part of the application process.

(21) The Program Convenor will assess and determine the outcome of an application for cross-institutional credit.

### Maximum Credit

(22) A maximum of 40 units of cross-institutional credit may be approved in undergraduate or postgraduate programs.

(23) Within undergraduate programs, only 10 units of the 40 unit maximum, may be at the highest level in the program.

(24) The relevant College Pro Vice-Chancellor may approve cross-institutional study exceeding the maximum 10 units at the highest level within the program in circumstances where the student would be significantly disadvantaged.

(25) For combined degree programs a maximum of 10 units at the highest level may be applied to each of the individual program components.

(26) The provisions listed in clauses 22 and 23 do not apply to students seeking credit for Study Abroad or Student Exchange. For provisions relating to credit for Study Abroad and Exchange refer to the Outbound Global Experience Procedure.

### Limitations

(27) Students will not be approved to exceed the maximum credit provisions per the Credit and Recognition of Prior Learning Policy, or the Program Based Credit Limits and Currency by undertaking cross-institutional study.

(28) Other limitations may apply per the Program-Based Credit Limits and Currency Schedule.

# Section 4 - Applications and Supporting Documentation

(29) Credit applications for formal learning must be submitted via the credit management system.

### Supporting Documentation

(30) Applications must include supporting documentation, including official academic transcripts demonstrating completion of the formal learning, and relevant course outlines.

(31) All supporting documentation for applications must be in English or accompanied by an English translation provided by an agency accepted by the Universities Admissions Centre (NSW and ACT) Pty Ltd (UAC).

(32) Applicants must:

a. ensure the authenticity of any supporting documentation;
b. retain supporting documentation for six months from application; and
c. produce the original supporting documentation if requested by the University.

(33) The University may take steps to verify the authenticity of any documentation provided. This may include seeking further information from parties relevant to the supporting documentation.

(34) The supply of false information, false or falsified documentation by a student to the University will result in the rejection of the credit application and/or the rescission of the credit granted. This may result in disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Conduct Rule.

### Assessment

(35) The Program Convenor will assess whether the evidence provided by the student demonstrates that the formal learning achieves the learning outcomes of the course(s) for which credit is sought.

(36) Where applications do not contain sufficient or appropriate evidence to enable the Program Convenor to make a determination, the student may be requested to provide additional documentation. If additional documentation is not provided, the application will be denied.

### Outcomes

(37) Applicants/students will be advised of the application outcome, including any reasons why credit has not been granted.

(38) Where an International applicant/student is granted credit, a new offer of admission that specifies the revised (if shortened) duration of the Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE) will be issued.

(39) Credit outcomes will lapse if the applicant does not accept and enrol in the program within twelve months of the issuance of the credit outcome. Where the outcome has lapsed, the applicant may re-apply for credit, but the outcome of the original approval is not guaranteed.

# Section 5 - Roles and Responsibilities

(40) Authorised officers with defined roles and responsibilities in the context of this document are:

| Role | Responsibility |
|---|---|
| Program Convenor | Consider and determine the outcome of credit applications on a case-by-case basis for specified and unspecified credit, in accordance with provisions of this document and the Program-Based Credit Limits and Currency. |
| Associate Dean (Education) | Consider and determine the outcome of an application in the absence of or in place of the Program Convenor. |
| Deputy Head of College (Education) | Consider and determine the outcome of an application in the absence of or in place of the Program Convenor. |
| Relevant Global Office, Pathways and Academic Learning Support Centre staff, Newcastle Australia Institute of Higher Education (NAIHE) and Student Central staff. | 1. Grant credit in line with approved articulation arrangements and precedents.<br>2. Grant credit for identical courses taken at the University subject to conditions listed in the Policy and this procedure.<br>3. Grant up to 20 units of unspecified credit for electives at the 1000 level and 20 units of unspecified elective credit at the 2000 level for completed AQF Diplomas and Advanced Diplomas, subject to conditions listed in the Policy and this procedure.<br>4. Grant unspecified credit for elective courses for studies completed at an equivalent level at an Australian higher education or equivalent institution.<br>5. Notify students of Program Convenor determinations.<br>6. Rescind credit at the request of the student, in the case of an over-enrolment, or where there is an error, or in other allowable circumstances under the Policy.<br>7. Reject any applications that fall outside of the eligibility criteria set out in this Procedure for credit, including applications for cross-institutional enrolment.<br>8. Record and maintain approved articulation arrangements in the credit transfer precedent database. |

# Section 6 - Relaxing Provision

(41) To provide for exceptional circumstances arising in any case, the President Academic Senate on the recommendation of a College Pro Vice-Chancellor, may relax a provision of this procedure provided that the relaxation:

a. does not compromise compliance with external obligations (including but not limited to contractual, legislative or accreditation requirements);
b. does not override a decision made under a formal delegation of authority;
c. does not replace a decision that is subject to a formal delegation of authority; and
d. gives due consideration to the principles of procedural fairness.

# Section 7 - Appendices

(42) Program-Based Credit Limits and Currency

## Status and Details

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|---|---|
| **Status** | Current |
| **Effective Date** | 10th September 2026 |
| **Review Date** | 22nd February 2027 |
| **Approval Authority** | President Academic Senate |
| **Approval Date** | 11th August 2026 |
| **Expiry Date** | Not Applicable |
| **Responsible Executive** | Belinda Yourn<br>Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic & Global) |
| **Enquiries Contact** | John Radvan<br>Senior Manager, Academic Governance & Compliance<br><br>Student Central |

## Glossary Terms and Definitions

**"Academic transcript"** - An official record of studies at the University.

**"Enabling program"** - A tertiary preparation program offered to domestic students.

**"University"** - The University of Newcastle, a body corporate established under sections 4 and 5 of the University of Newcastle Act 1989.

**"Applicant"** - Where referring to a student, an applicant is an individual seeking entry to a program or course offered by the University or its partner organisation/s.  For all other uses of this term, the generic definition applies.

**"Award"** - When referring to a University qualification, this term means an academic qualification approved by Academic Senate that is conferred when a student has met the relevant program requirements. For all other uses of this term, the generic definition applies.

**"Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE)"** - Means the document issued through the Australian Government's relevant department and associated systems, by authorised officers of the University that confirms that an international student is eligible to enrol in a course. The CoE is required under Commonwealth Legislation for the student visa.

**"Course"** - When referring to a course offered by the University, a course is a set of learning activities or learning opportunities with defined, assessed and recorded learning outcomes. A course will be identified by an alphanumeric course code and course title. Course types include core courses, compulsory courses, directed courses, capstone courses and electives. For all other uses of this term, the generic definition applies.

**"Credit"** - When referring to course credit, credit is the recognition of equivalence in content and learning outcomes between different types of learning and/or qualifications. Credit can reduce the amount of learning required to achieve a qualification. For all other uses of this term, the generic definition applies.

**"Student"** - A person formally enrolled in a course or active in a program offered by the University or affiliated entity.

**"Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)"** - Means an assessment of an individual's prior learning to determine where credit will be granted. RPL includes formal, informal, and non-formal learning.

**"Unspecified credit"** - Is credit granted towards directed or elective courses of a program of study.

**"Volume of learning"** - Identifies the notional duration of all activities required for the achievement of the learning outcomes specified for a particular AQF qualification type. It is expressed in equivalent full-time years.

**"Disciplinary action"** - When used in relation to staff of the University, this is as defined in the applicable and current Enterprise Bargaining Agreement, or the staff member's employment contract. When used in relation to students of the University, this refers to the range of penalties that may be applied under the Student Conduct Rule.

**"Learning outcome"** - In accordance with the AQF definitions, the expression of a set of knowledge, skills and the application of the knowledge and skills a person has acquired and is able to demonstrate as a result of learning.

**"Postgraduate"** - Any qualification being at the level of Graduate Certificate or above.

**"Program"** - When referring to learning, a program is a sequence of approved learning, usually leading to an Award. For all other uses of this term, the generic definition applies.

**"Program Convenor"** - The academic staff member with overall responsibility for the management and quality of a program.

**"Staff"** - Means a person who was at the relevant time employed by the University and includes professional and academic staff of the University, by contract or ongoing, as well as conjoint staff but does not include visitors to the University.

**"Undergraduate"** - Refers to any qualification up to and including the level of a Bachelor Honours degree.

**"Unit"** - When referring to an academic unit, unit means the proportional amount of academic credit allotted to a course. This term is used to define the requirements for a program award of the University and indicate a student's enrolment load. For all other uses of this term, the generic definition applies.

**"International applicant"** - An applicant (as defined by the University) who is not an Australian citizen, Australian Permanent Resident or New Zealand citizen (or dual citizenship holders of either Australia or New Zealand). See also International Student.

**"International student"** - A student (as defined by the University) who is not an Australian citizen, Australian Permanent Resident or New Zealand citizen (or dual citizenship holders of either Australia or New Zealand). This includes students who will be studying offshore and those who will be studying onshore and have a student visa, provisional residency, temporary residency, bridging visa, or any other category of non-permanent visa for Australia.

**"formal learning"** - Learning that takes place through a structured program of learning that leads to full or partial achievement of an officially accredited qualification, course, or program.