

Credit and RPL Policy

1. Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this policy is to set out processes for credit and recognition of prior learning (RPL) for higher education courses at The Performing Arts Conservatory. This policy outlines processes that align to the recommendations in the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) for the granting of credit and RPL.

This policy applies to all members of the Conservatory's higher education community.

2. Objectives

Applications for credit are to be:

- offered at the time of enrolment.
- processed in a timely manner.
- assessed in a fair, valid, reliable and flexible manner.
- decided based on evidence that is current, authentic and sufficient.

The Conservatory is committed to conducting fair and transparent processes for the granting of credit and RPL that protects the integrity of the Conservatory's higher education courses. The objectives of this policy are to:

- provide opportunities for students to have their prior learning acknowledged.
- permit progression through a course in a reduced timeframe, where appropriate.
- grant credit where prior learning has been demonstrated to meet the relevant unit/course outcomes.
- enable flexible pathways between courses to contribute to life-long learning.

3. Implementation

The Director of Higher Education will ensure that the requirements for determining credit, including maximum levels of credit, are adhered to when assessing applications for credit or RPL.

The Conservatory may enter into articulation agreements with other educational institutions that outline pathways between qualifications and the credit provisions that have been agreed. Articulation agreements must be consistent with the requirements of this policy.

Prior Learning

Prior learning may be classified as formal or informal and determines whether an application is for credit (formal prior learning) or recognition of prior learning (informal prior learning).

Formal Prior Learning

Formal prior learning is acquired through formal processes such as the successful completion or partial completion of a course at a recognised educational institution. A recognised institution may be a tertiary institution in Australia or a recognised overseas institution.

Informal Prior Learning

Informal prior learning is acquired through informal processes such as employer/workplace training, and through relevant work/life experience.

4. Procedure

Applications may be made for credit for formal prior learning or RPL for informal prior learning. Students should enrol in the unit/s and attend classes until a decision regarding credit has been made. Fees apply.

4.1. Application for Credit or RPL

All applications should be made using either the Credit Application Form or the RPL Application Form, available on the Conservatory website. Documentation must be submitted to support claims of prior learning. Students must submit the form to Student Administration staff together with the relevant fee.

All applications should be submitted at least four (4) weeks before the course commencement date. Later applications may be accepted, but may not be able to be processed in time for credit or RPL to be granted before the census date. Credit or RPL will only be granted if evidence is provided that the student has obtained the skills and knowledge necessary to meet the outcomes of the course of study.

Formal Prior Learning Evidence

Students seeking credit for formal prior learning are required to fill out the Credit Application Form, and attach certified evidence demonstrating successful completion of the unit/s of study or award. Successful completion means that a grade of 'pass' or higher, or competent must have been achieved for the course of study. Higher education units with a grade of 'pass conceded' or lower will not be eligible for credit. The Conservatory may contact the issuing institution to verify the authenticity of the documents.

Appropriate evidence includes, but is not limited to certified copies of:

- official academic transcripts.
- official academic records.
- official testamur or award qualification.

Other evidence may include:

- institutional handbooks/course guides for the units of study under application, that include details of the unit's content, learning outcomes, and assessment details.
- demonstrated equivalence of overseas qualifications to Australian qualifications.

Students should ensure that academic transcripts and all other supporting documentation has been certified as true copies and translated into English by a qualified translator.

Units of study where credit has been granted will not be included in the calculation of a student's grade point average (GPA).

Informal Prior Learning Evidence

Students seeking RPL for informal prior learning are required to fill out the RPL Application Form, and attach a statutory declaration as evidence of own work, and/or certified evidence demonstrating that they have acquired the prior learning under application. The onus is on the student to provide appropriate evidence. Appropriate evidence includes, but is not limited to evidence of:

- Reflective papers, journals or portfolios that relate past learning to the learning outcomes of the unit under application.
- Resumes and referees that have been verified.
- Examples of the student's work drawn from the workplace, social, community or other setting.
- Testimonials/letters regarding relevant skills or knowledge.
- Direct observation of demonstration of relevant skills or knowledge.
- Successful completion of assessment or demonstration of capabilities relevant to the Conservatory course.
- Any combination of the above.

The onus is on the student to provide appropriate evidence. The following will be taken into account:

- acceptable evidence such as resumes and referees that have been verified, and certified copies of training certificates.
- interviews with the course coordinator and additional assessment methods to ensure that the student has maintained the required skills and knowledge to meet the outcomes of the unit of study.
- credit will only be granted if evidence is provided that the student has acquired and maintained the skills and knowledge necessary to meet the outcomes of the unit of study.

Application Checking Process

The Admissions Officer will check the relevant application form to ensure that it includes:

- the correct unit name/s and code/s.
- required evidence.
- all required information.
- payment of the correct fee.

If the application does not contain all the appropriate information, including the appropriate fee, the form will be returned to the student, outlining the missing information. Where required, the Admissions Officer will check the Department of Education's Country Profile website for international qualification equivalence.

Complete applications are sent to the Director of Higher Education for consideration. The Director of Higher Education may delegate verification of evidence and assessment to a Unit Coordinator or Lecturer who has appropriate content knowledge to make an informed assessment.

4.2. Assessment of Credit Applications

Credit Limits

The type and level of credit that can be awarded to students for prior learning will be dependent on the type and level of prior learning undertaken as well as specific unit/course requirements.

The AQF provides for examples for negotiating credit agreements between institutions towards higher level AQF qualifications in the same or related discipline. These examples are to be used as a guide for the maximum limits for granting credit as follows:

- 50% credit for an Advanced Diploma or Associate Degree linked to a 3-year bachelor's degree.
- 37.5% credit for an Advanced Diploma or Associate Degree linked to a 4-year bachelor's degree.

- 33% credit for a Diploma linked to a 3-year bachelor's degree.
- 25% credit for a Diploma linked to a 4-year bachelor's degree.

The maximum credit granted for informal prior learning from work experience would normally be limited to 25% of the total credit points of the entire degree course.

The Academic Board may grant credit above these limits in exceptional circumstances on a case by case basis but must ensure that the integrity of the course is maintained.

Assessment Process

The type and level of credit that can be awarded to students for prior learning will be dependent on the type and level of prior learning undertaken as well as specific unit/course requirements. The duration for assessing credit applications may vary depending on the complexity of the application. However, applications will be finalised within four weeks, assuming that all necessary evidence was provided with the application, unless exceptional circumstances apply.

Types of Credit

Credit based on prior learning may be granted as specified credit, unspecified credit, block credit, or advanced standing. The granting of credit will take into account the following as listed in the *AQF Qualifications Pathway Policy*:

- learning outcomes,
- volume of learning,
- unit of study, including content, and
- learning and assessment approaches.

Factors

In assessing an application for the granting of credit, the following factors will be taken into account:

- the objectives and requirements of a particular unit/course of study.
- level of entry for the award for which credit is sought.
- the duration of the course.
- assessment methods.
- practical training and experience as part of the course, where relevant.
- articulation arrangements.
- currency of the course or unit (generally study undertaken more than 10 years ago is not granted credit).
- equivalence of overseas qualifications.

Assessment Steps

- The Director of Higher Education will usually delegate assessment of credit applications to the relevant unit coordinator or content expert (assessor).
- Applications for credit will be assessed against the evidence provided, that demonstrates equivalence with the learning outcomes for which credit is sought. The Director of Higher Education or delegate may request further information to assess the application by sending the student a Request for Credit Information Letter and/or arranging a meeting with the student.
- The assessor will draft a Credit Recommendation Report to the Director of Higher Education, making a recommendation on the application for credit.

Decisions on Credit and RPL Applications

The Director of Higher Education is responsible for making decisions on credit applications that are fair and transparent and adhere to the requirements of this policy. Decisions should also take into account the entry requirements of the course, and have regard for credit precedents. The length of time since study was undertaken will also be taken into account. For example, credit is not usually granted for study undertaken more than 10 years ago.

Full credit will be granted where a student's knowledge/skills meets the full requirements of the unit. In such cases, students will be exempt from studying the unit. Credit may or may not reduce the length of a student's course of study.

Notification of Decision

The Director of Higher Education will notify students of the decision on a credit or RPL application in writing, within 7 working days of receiving an assessment recommendation from the Assessor.

The Director of Higher Education must record the decision on the application form and notify Student Administration of the outcomes of the credit application, so that exemptions are recorded on the student's file.

The student will be asked to respond to the decision in writing to notify the Conservatory whether they accept the decision, or whether they wish to lodge an appeal.

If the application is successful, the notification will outline the course duration to indicate if the duration of study has been reduced. The Director of Higher Education will also notify the Admissions Manager of the credit outcome so that exemptions can be recorded on the student's file.

4.3. International students applying for credit

If the duration of the degree course has been changed for an accepted international student as a result of the application decision, it must be reported in accordance with section 19 of the ESOS Act. In accordance with Standard 2 of the National Code:

2.4 If the registered provider grants RPL or course credit to an overseas student, the registered provider must give a written record of the decision to the overseas student to accept and retain the written record of acceptance for two years after the overseas student ceases to be an accepted student.

2.5 If the registered provider grants the overseas student RPL or course credit that reduces the overseas student's course length, the provider must:

2.5.1 inform the student of the reduced course duration following granting of RPL and ensure the confirmation of enrolment (CoE) is issued only for the reduced duration of the course

2.5.2 report any change in course duration in PRISMS if RPL or course credit is granted after the overseas student's visa is granted.

If the applicant is an international student applying for a study visa the following applies:

- Where credit is granted before the issue of a visa, the actual course duration in the eCoE issued to the student will be reduced.
- Where credit is granted after the issue of a visa, the Institution will report the change of course duration via PRISMS.

If an international student is granted credit that shortens their course, it remains a visa condition that they continue to study full-time.

4.4. Appeals

Students may lodge an appeal for a review of the decision if they are dissatisfied with the credit outcome as outlined in the Student Grievance Policy.

5. Definitions

Admission: The process for admitting an applicant into a course at the Conservatory, following a successful application and acceptance of the offer of a place in the course.

Admission pathway: Any option available to prospective higher education students that will enable them to meet the entry requirements of their chosen courses.

Advanced standing: A form of credit for any previous learning (reference AQF 2nd edition) – see also the definitions for ‘credit transfer’ and ‘recognition of prior learning’.

AQF Qualifications Pathway Policy: A policy that forms part of the Australian Qualifications Framework and supports students lifelong learning.

Articulation agreement: Is an agreement between the Conservatory and another institution to document and publicise a specifically approved pathway for progression between a course at the other institution and the Conservatory award course, involving specific credit arrangements.

Block Credit: Is credit granted towards whole stages or components of a course of learning leading to a qualification. For example, when a group of units undertaken at another institution is recognised as broadly equivalent to the learning outcomes of a group of units within a Conservatory course, block credit is granted.

Course: Is a single course leading to an Australian higher education award.

Credit: Is the value assigned for the recognition of equivalence in content and learning outcomes between different types of learning and/or qualifications. Credit reduces the amount of learning required to achieve a qualification and may be through credit transfer, articulation agreement, recognition of prior learning or advanced standing.

Credit arrangements: Are formal negotiated arrangements within and between issuing organisations or accrediting authorities and are about student entitlement to credit. They may also be formal arrangements made between issuing organisations and students.

Credit outcomes: Are the results of a process of determining a student’s application for credit or credit transfer.

Credit transfer: Is a process that provides students with agreed and consistent credit outcomes for components of a qualification based on identified equivalence in content and learning outcomes between matched qualifications.

ESOS Act: The Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000.

IELTS – International English Language Testing System: An international standardised test of English language proficiency. It is jointly managed by University of Cambridge ESOL Examinations, the British Council and IDP Education Pty Ltd.

International student: A person (whether within or outside Australia) who holds a student visa, but does not include students of a kind prescribed in the regulations.

National Code: The National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students in force under Part 4 of the ESOS Act.

Overseas student: See International student.

PRISMS: The Provider Registration and International Student Management System (PRISMS) used to process information given to the Secretary of DET by registered providers.

Recognition of prior learning (RPL): Is an assessment process that involves assessment of an individual's relevant informal prior learning to determine the credit outcomes of an individual application for credit.

Specified credit: Is granted for one or more specific units in a course, exempting students from those units, and awarding the appropriate credit points in their place. Specified credit may be granted where the student has met the learning outcomes, attained the knowledge and/or developed the skills related to a specific unit.

Unit: A discrete unit of study, where a combination of units make up a course of study.

Unspecified credit: Is granted in the form of credit points which take the place of elective unit (listed or free choice) or other optional components in a course. Unspecified credit may be granted where prior learning is judged to be relevant to the learning outcomes of a course as a whole.

6. Related Policies and Procedures

The following policies and procedures are related to this policy:

- Admissions Policy
- Student Grievance Policy
- Refund Policy Domestic Students
- Refund Policy International Students

Forms:

- Credit Application Form
- RPL Application Form

7. Review

Three years from commencement.

8. Accountabilities

The Academic Board is responsible for review and approval of this policy.

The policy is to be implemented via induction and training of staff and distribution to students and the Conservatory's higher education community via the website and other publications.

9. Revision History

| Approval Authority | Contact Person | Revision Due Date | Revision Date | Approved Date | Version No. | Revision Description |
|--------------------|----------------|-------------------|---------------|---------------|-------------|---|
| Academic Board | Chair | 01/07/19 | | 11/04/16 | 1 | New document |
| Academic Board | Chair | | | 12/12/2019 | 1.1 | Changes to accommodate international students |
| Academic Board | Chair | | | 13/01/2021 | 2.0 | Minor Changes |