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Policy Document Approver	Academic Board
Responsible Body/Person	Academic Board
Next Review date	March 2028
Superseded documents	<i>Credit Transfer and Recognised Prior Learning Policy</i>
Related documents	<i>Credit Transfer Rules</i>
Related HE Standards	1.2
Related National Code Standards	
Glossary	Definitions for any words in Bold in this document can be found in the Policy Glossary . The first instance of each defined term has been outlined in bold.

1. PURPOSE

To recognise the value of prior learning and experience for coursework awards by providing a system for awarding credit.

2. DEFINITIONS

The following definitions apply for the purpose of this Policy:

Exemption is where a student is not required to take a certain **unit(s)** on the basis of work already completed but is required to undertake an alternative unit of equivalent **credit points**.

3. SCOPE

This policy applies to all coursework awards of the Australian University of Theology.

4. POLICY STATEMENT

The AUT recognises the value of prior learning and experience by awarding credit for courses of similar content to the learning and experience. The relevance of prior learning and experience is also acknowledged to reduce over time as knowledge becomes less current. This is due to changes and developments in the field of study, and loss of knowledge and skills due to disuse.

The AUT will grant credit transfer for students who have completed academic study deemed equivalent in content and academic standing. In accordance with the *AQF Qualifications Pathways Policy* the AUT also gives credit for learning that has occurred outside the formal education and training system. This is called **Recognised Prior Learning (RPL)**. The key difference between credit transfer and RPL is that in RPL it is the student who is assessed, while for credit transfer the previous course or unit(s) is assessed.

Consistent with Standard 1.2.2 of the *Higher Education Standards (Threshold Standards) 2021*, **advanced standing** through recognition of prior learning or credit transfer is granted only if:

- a. students granted such credit are not disadvantaged in achieving the expected learning outcomes for the course of study or qualification, and
- b. the integrity of the course of study and the qualification are maintained.

Advanced standing through recognition of prior learning or credit transfer is only granted towards a course if the units requested contribute towards the completion of the requirements of a course.

5. POLICY APPLICATION

Application for credit transfer or RPL

- 5.1 Applications for the granting of credit or RPL will be completed by a **student** requesting credit or RPL on the appropriate form and are to be approved by the **AUT Registrar**.
- 5.2 Students are strongly encouraged to apply prior to the commencement of a **course** to assist with accurate course advice and appropriate candidature periods.
- 5.3 No fees associated with RPL or **credit transfer** applications are to be imposed by the **Affiliated Colleges** or the AUT office.
- 5.4 An application for the granting of credit or RPL requires the preparation of a **Prior Learning Portfolio (PLP)**, which details the student's previous work experience, education and training details, and other interests and skills. Supporting documentation, such as references, course details about previous study, reports, should be included with the application. Applicants must identify AUT **units** against which the credit may be granted.
- 5.5 In the case where credit is sought based on RPL, the application should outline the link between the student's learning experiences and the learning outcomes of the unit(s) in which the student is seeking credit.
- 5.6 Students may be required to undertake some form of **assessment** to demonstrate that they have achieved the **learning outcomes** stated.
- 5.7 Overseas applicants who wish to be considered for credit transfer/RPL, should lodge their PLP when they lodge their application for admission for a course.

Prior Learning Portfolios (PLP)

- 5.8 In the case of accredited study with a recognised provider, the PLP should contain:
 - a. Certified copies of statement(s) of satisfactory completion of non-AUT courses or units offered by a recognised provider;
 - b. For each non-AUT unit successfully completed, documentation from the provider which states:
 - i) the objectives, learning outcomes and content of the unit;
 - ii) details of any formal assessment of learning undertaken; and
 - iii) details of the contact hours of the unit.

Usually detailed unit outlines will be regarded as sufficient documentation.

5.9 In the case of any learning that isn't accredited study with a recognised provider, applications should include:

- a. details of prior learning experience(s) to support the claim for credit in the proposed AUT units, including the applicant showing how the prior learning experience(s) leads the applicant to the completion of the learning outcomes of the units being sought for credit;
- b. a detailed curriculum vitae;
- c. letters of support from appropriate persons/bodies who can verify these details.

Senescence Rule

5.10 Applications for course credit are subject to the senescence rule. The senescence rule takes precedence over all other credit regulations.

5.11 According to the senescence rule, credit will only be considered for a unit of an **AUT** award if the study on which the application is based occurred no more than ten (10) years before the commencement of the **AUT** award.

5.12 One exception to clause **5.11** is within **coursework masters** degrees where the course has been designed to have a reduced volume of learning for graduates holding a theological qualification. The granting of this reduction in volume of learning (through credit transfer from a prior theological qualification) is exempted from clause 5.10.

5.13 Where a student had received credit transfer from a prior AUT or non-AUT course (Course A) into an AUT award (Course B), and wishes to transfer to a new AUT course (Course C), while the candidature of Course B remains enrolled and valid, but the units from Course A are more than 10 years old, consideration will be given to whether the student could have chosen to enter Course C instead of Course B. Credit transfer from all relevant units in Course B into Course C may take place despite the units from Course A being older than 10 years at the time of course transfer to Course C, if determined that the units would have contributed to Course C at the time of entry to Course B, and that a person's period of used candidature in Course B would not exceed Course C's maximum candidature period.

Example: Student completes studies in 2012-2014 (Course A). Student enters an AUT Bachelor of Theology in 2021, receiving credits from Course A. In 2025, the student seeks to transfer from the Bachelor of Theology to an Associate Degree of Ministry. Despite all units from Course A now being older than 10 years, the candidature of the student's Bachelor of Theology is valid, and had they enrolled in the Associate Degree of Ministry in 2021, all units from Course A would have been credited at the time. In addition, the Associate Degree's candidature period would not have expired by 2025. Therefore, approval can be granted for all relevant units from the 2012-2014 Course A to be applied to the student's Associate Degree of Ministry commencing in 2025, as well as all relevant completed units from the Bachelor of Theology in 2021-2024.

5.14 The senescence rule does not negate the possibility of students applying for RPL. If it can be shown that the knowledge obtained in study from more than ten (10) years ago has been kept current, then consideration may be given to granting RPL.

Credit transfer

- 5.15 In AUT coursework courses, prior learning is recognised and/or credit is granted from previous study for particular units. **Block credit** is not applied except in the case of the **Bachelor of Christian Studies** (BChrStuds) where block credit forms part of the requirements for the awarding of the degree. Credit is awarded based on the rules in clauses 5.16-5.23.
- 5.16 No more than 33% of an AUT award can be granted in credit from prior non-AUT study or learning – either in Credit Transfer or RPL.
- 5.16.1 One exception to this is on admission to a **Coursework Masters** degree where course structures intentionally specify possibilities for reduced volume of learning based on the completion of prior theological studies. If the block credit granted on admission to a Coursework Masters degree exceeds 33% of the course, to maintain the integrity of the course, no further credit transfer or RPL will be permitted.
- 5.16.2 Another exception is within the Master of Professional Ministry, where up to 50% of the course may be granted as credit transfer.
- 5.16.3 The **Vice-Chancellor** or the **University Registrar** have authority to waive the 33% limit in individual special cases, where the student is not disadvantaged by receiving the credit, and where the integrity of the award is maintained. One example might be where a provider closes down and students need to find another similar provider to continue in a related course, and AUT would review appropriateness of adjusting the 33% limit in that scenario. Another example is where a college has a market need for admission to a program which relies on completion of another program for entry, such as completion of a related CertIV for admission into a Diploma course, where up to 50% of the Diploma course may be appropriate, without compromising the course integrity. In line with the TEQSA Guidance Note on Admissions (Coursework) and Guidance Note on Credit and Recognition of Prior Learning, in all instances of the AUT Vice-Chancellor or AUT Registrar granting a higher volume of credit than the 33% limit, a record of the decision will be kept.
- 5.16.4 For clarity, since the Bachelor of Christian Studies course structure requires the completion of one third of the course in a discipline other than Religious Studies and credited to the course through block credit, students remain eligible for credit transfer or RPL for up to 33% of the remaining component of the degree course.
- 5.17 No credit can be granted from units completed at AQF Levels 5-7 to units at Levels 8-9 in a postgraduate course.
- 5.18 No unit already passed or for which credit has been granted in an AUT award can be repeated for a merit grade.
- 5.19 Units for which credit is granted from non-AUT awards are designated AEG and have no impact on the GPA of a student.
- 5.20 Where credit is granted from a non-AUT source towards one or more assessment

pieces within a unit, those units are not eligible for a merit grade.

5.21 Where students are granted advanced standing, their candidature period will be calculated in the following manner, with the outcome being whichever result ends up with the greatest candidature period for the student:

5.21.1 candidature to be shortened by the proportion of the course granted as credit. For example a student commencing a course and receiving one third of the course as credit will commence the candidature of the new course at that point, and receive two thirds of the regular candidature period; or

5.21.2 candidature to be set as what would have been the expiry date of the new course, had the student enrolled in that course as at the start of their previous course.

Example: a student who enrolls and completes a Graduate Diploma in 2024, then enrolls in a subsequent naturally articulating 288cp extended Masters degree in 2025, which normally has a maximum candidature period of 9 years. The calculation under 5.21.1 would see that student entering the masters degree with one third of the course as credit, receiving only 2/3rds of the candidature period (6 years) to complete the remainder of the Masters. This clause allows for the 9 year candidature period to commence from the start of 2024 when the student commenced their nested Graduate Diploma, giving them 9 full actual years to complete the whole program (8 remaining years from transfer to the Masters).

5.22 The detailed rules for credit transfer from specific non-AUT courses and between specific AUT courses is set out in the *Credit Transfer Rules*.

Exemptions

5.23 Exemptions to specific course regulations (such as the requirement for a particular number of credit points of units in a particular unit field, or the requirement for a particular compulsory unit) may be granted in cases where there is no direct correlation between units studied and those for which the student is seeking credit, but where it is felt that the student would not benefit from repeating material similar in nature to that already completed elsewhere. Exemptions may also be granted in cases where there is a direct correlation between units studied and specific AUT units of study, but that these are not eligible for credit for any reason, such as clauses 5.11, 5.15, or 5.16. The granting of exemptions does not reduce a student's remaining total study load for an award.

Recognised Prior Learning

5.24 In order to recognise prior learning it is necessary to compare the learning the individual has achieved against the learning outcomes of the proposed units to determine if the prior learning fulfils any of them.

5.25 The processes used to assess RPL applications may take several forms, such as:

a. participation in the same or modified versions of the assessment the student would be required to complete;

b. assessment based on a portfolio of evidence;

- c. direct observation of demonstration of skill or competence;
 - d. written reflections or portfolios that relate past learning to the learning or competency outcomes of the current unit(s)/course;
 - e. provision of examples of the student’s work drawn from the work, social, community or other setting in which the student applied their learning, skill or competence;
 - f. testimonials of learning, skill or competence;
 - g. combinations of any of the above.
- 5.26 The assessment of RPL should consider prior learning regardless of how, when and where it was acquired, provided that the learning is current and relevant to the learning or competency outcomes in a unit(s)/course.

Assessment and Approval of Credit

- 5.27 Upon granting credit to a student, the AUT will inform the student’s home college in writing of the approval. The student’s home college will inform the student of the outcome and will work with the student on a course progress plan for the remainder of the student’s course.
- 5.28 With regard to overseas students, before credit is granted, the student must agree to an offer of credit in writing. If credit granted shortens a student’s course, this must be reflected in the offer letter and will be indicated either on the **eCoE** issued for that student to commence the course, or reported on **PRISMS**. The eCoE will be shortened by the proportion of the award granted advanced standing.
- 5.29 Written records of the application for credit and the acceptance of credit and RPL decisions must be retained by AUT for a period of at least two years after the student ceases to be an accepted student within the applicable course.

6. QUALITY ASSURANCE

Identify explicit mechanisms for measuring the effectiveness of the organisation in achieving the objectives of this policy.

7. RELATED DOCUMENTS AND LEGISLATION

Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF), including the Pathways Policy
Higher Education Standards (Threshold Standards) 2021
TEQSA Guidance Note: Admissions (Coursework)

8. VERSION HISTORY

Version	Approved by	Approval Date	Effective Date	Changes made

1	Academic Board	29 July 2016	29 July 2016	Whole policy revised in light of new template, GSF now granted as RPL, removed rule, clauses on surrender of qualifications removed
2	Academic Board	9 Sept 2016	9 Sept 2016	Minor changes of terminology
3	Academic Board	8 March 2019	8 March 2019	Reference Higher Education Standards (Threshold Standards) 2015, further outline exemptions to course regulations when advanced standing is not granted, grant exemption to senescence policy for coursework masters designed on a reduced VOL for theological graduates
4	Coursework Committee	26 July 2019	26 July 2019	Create exception to 33% prior learning limit in coursework masters degrees (section 5.15).
5	Coursework Committee	8 October 2021	8 October 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update references from HESF 2015 to HESF 2021 • Amend section 5.2. • Add policy statement: Advanced standing through recognition of prior learning or credit transfer is only granted towards a course if the units requested contribute towards the completion of the requirements of a course. Add: If the block credit granted on admission to a Coursework Masters degree exceeds 33% of the course, to maintain

				the integrity of the course, no further credit transfer or RPL will be permitted.
6	Coursework Committee	24 June 2022	24 June 2022	Policy review; add clarity to limit of credit transfer / RPL in the BChrStuds; add authority for the ACT Dean or ACT Registrar to modify the limit of credit transfer / RPL in special cases
7	Academic Board	8 March 2024	8 March 2024	Policy review; add exemption to the normal limit of credit transfer for the Master of Professional Ministry
8	Academic Board	7 March 2025	7 March 2025	New document format, minor editorial updates, implementing change to implementation of senescence and course candidature periods when applying for prior learning into another AUT course, based on CC2409-09.2 recommendation.
9	Academic Board	6 March 2026	6 March 2026	Policy review; document the requirement for AUT to retain records relating to RPL and credit applications.

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