

## CHS Award of Credit Policy

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## 1. Purpose

The ECA College of Health Sciences (CHS) is committed to the ideals of lifelong learning and recognises the need to facilitate continued opportunities for the pursuit of formal education through the recognition of previous learning. This policy outlines the principles, procedures and limits for the recognition of an individual's prior learning and experience through the awarding of credit towards a CHS award course through credit transfer, recognition of prior learning (RPL) or articulation.

## 2. Scope

This Policy applies to all CHS coursework students seeking credit towards an AQF recognised award for prior or concurrent learning from other courses of the College or other institutions.

## 3. Definitions

Item	Definition
<i>AQF</i>	The Australian Qualifications Framework, a national policy which describes the minimum standards and levels of Australian qualifications and award courses.
<i>Articulation arrangements</i>	"Articulation arrangements enable students to progress from a completed qualification to another with admission and/or credit in a defined qualification pathway" (AQF, 2013).
<i>Block Credit</i>	Block credit is a form of credit granted towards whole stages or components of an officially accredited qualification or program of learning.
<i>Census date</i>	The last date a student can withdraw from a subject without being financially liable i.e. having to pay for the unit.
<i>Course</i>	A structured sequence of study undertaken at a recognised higher education provider, leading to the award of a degree, diploma, certificate or other recognised qualification.
<i>Credit</i>	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 be undertaken to achieve a qualification and may be attained through credit transfer, recognition of prior learning or articulation.
<i>Credit Transfer</i>	"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" (AQF, 2013).
<i>Credit Transfer Arrangement</i>	A credit transfer arrangement defines the availability of credit transfer from one qualification to another.
<i>Recognition of Prior Learning</i>	"Recognition of prior learning is an assessment process that involves assessment of an individual's relevant prior learning (including formal, informal and non-formal learning) to determine the credit outcomes of an individual application for credit (National Quality Council Training Packages glossary)" (AQF, 2013).

<b>Item</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<i>Register of Outcomes</i>	A database in which details of the outcomes of assessments of applications for recognition of prior learning are recorded.
<i>Specified Credit</i>	Specified credit is a form of credit granted towards the core and/or specified components of an officially accredited qualification or program of learning.
<i>Unspecified Credit</i>	Unspecified credit is a form of credit that may be granted towards elective components of an officially accredited qualification or program of learning.
<i>Unit</i>	A component of an award course with specified assessment requirements for which a final grade is awarded upon completion.
<i>Uncredentialed learning</i>	Knowledge and skills acquired through relevant in-service programs, work experience and other experiential learning.

## 4. Principles

The following principles and practice form the foundation for this policy.

When granting credit through recognition of prior learning or when entering into a credit arrangement with other providers, the College will:

- comply and be consistent with applicable Australian laws, regulations and standards, including those enunciated in the VET Quality Framework, Higher Education Standards Framework and Australian Qualifications Framework
- preserve the integrity of learning outcomes and/or discipline requirements of the award qualification to which the credit applies
- consider the comparability and equivalence of the learning outcomes, volume of learning, the program of study previously undertaken, including content, and approaches to learning and assessment of previous learning
- recognise accredited awards and statements of attainment issued by any Australian commonwealth, state or territory authorised issuing organisation (or comparable international equivalents)
- recognise that learning can be formal, non-formal or informal, though not all of these may be applicable to all forms of credit

Determining the awarding of credit requires academic judgement. This applies when making decisions about block, specified or unspecified credit, articulation or recognition of prior learning. Staff determining the granting of credit must ensure the decision concerning the granting of credit into or towards an award is information and evidence based, equitable, transparent, timely and academically defensible.

## 5. Policy Statement

The College may award credit in the form of block, specified or unspecified credit through articulation, credit transfer or recognition of prior learning in accordance with this policy.

For articulation or common credit transfer arrangements, specified, block or unspecified credit will be granted to an individual consistent with the arrangements described in policy according to the following principles:

- the amount of credit granted is determined by the specified articulation or common credit transfer arrangement, and
- the individual must have fully satisfied all terms of the specified articulation or credit transfer arrangement to be granted credit based on the arrangement.

## **6. Articulations and Credit Transfer Arrangements**

### **6.1. Articulation**

Articulation arrangements are based on student achievement through formal learning and provide a seamless pathway with automatic admission into one qualification from another. Articulation arrangements may include:

- clustered qualifications involving lower qualifications that are embedded completely in the next qualification with multiple exits and entry points (an articulated suite of qualifications), or
- partially clustered qualifications that include some qualification components of the lower level qualification nested into the linked qualification, or
- arrangements where two separately designed qualifications are linked to each other to form a defined qualification linkage and credit pathway.

The amount of credit as agreed by the organisations in an articulation arrangement will be applied automatically to any student on successful completion of the previous qualification in the articulation agreement.

### **6.2. Credit Transfer**

The College may award credit by credit transfer for units undertaken through prior formal learning based on identified equivalence in content and learning outcomes between matched officially accredited qualifications or programs of learning. The amount of credit to be awarded must be in accordance with this Policy. The agreed credit outcomes may include any form of credit: block, specified or unspecified credit.

### **6.3. Establishment of College Articulation and Common Credit Transfer Arrangement**

CHS may systematically establish formalised, time-bound, articulation arrangements and/or common credit transfer arrangements between accredited qualifications of the College and other authorised issuing organisations. These may be across AQF qualifications at the same level, as well as between qualifications at different levels. They are established based on the assessment of equivalence between qualifications and/or the way in which the discipline areas of two qualifications are suited to articulation. This considers:

- whether the articulation or credit transfer arrangement will result in a logical sequential qualification pathway for entry into and/or credit transfer towards the same or a higher level AQF qualification
- the comparability and equivalence of the learning outcomes, volume of learning, program of study (including content), and learning and assessment approaches, and
- When establishing articulation or credit transfer arrangements for individuals towards higher level AQF qualifications in the same or a related discipline, the limitations in Schedule 1 must be adhered to.

## **6.4. Guidelines for establishing articulation and credit transfer arrangements**

Articulation will be based on linking one qualification to another higher-level qualification to establish content relationships and equivalence between them, making a judgment about any credit outcomes between the linked qualifications, and setting out the agreed credit outcomes and the defined pathway between the linked qualifications in a documented agreement which is publicly available.

The credit transfer process will be based on mapping, comparing and evaluating the extent to which the learning outcome, discipline content and assessment requirements of the individual components of one qualification are equivalent to the learning outcomes, discipline content and assessment requirements of the individual components of another qualification.

The granting of credit through an articulation or credit transfer arrangement does not preclude any further institutional or individual student negotiations for additional credit.

## **6.5. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)**

The College may award credit through Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) for a higher education level unit on the basis of either:

- prior formal learning, or
- a combination of prior formal learning with prior non-formal and/or informal learning.

The College will:

- identify the evidence required
- provide advice to students about the process
- provide students with sufficient information to enable them to prepare their evidence to meet the requirements of the RPL assessment process
- assess the application using appropriate evidence-gathering methods and tools
- record the outcome and RPL assessment
- ensure that, as with all assessment, decisions about the award of credit are undertaken by academic or teaching staff with expertise in the subject, content or skills area, as well as knowledge of and expertise in RPL assessment
- recognise learning regardless of how, when and where it was acquired, provided the learning is relevant to the learning outcomes in the qualification
- ensure that the evidence provided is valid, authentic, current and sufficient and that the process is fair, flexible reliable and valid.

Professional accreditation guidelines for some of College academic programs require that some units are taught within the course at the College. In these programs, RPL will not be approved.

## 6.6. Applications for recognition of prior learning

Applications for RPL must be completed using the CHS Recognition of Prior Learning Form and lodged online via the CHS website or submitted to the Student Services Team.

A successful application for recognition of prior learning is likely to result in the student having to vary their unit enrolments. Applications for recognition of prior learning therefore **must be lodged no less than 10 (ten) working days before the census date of the first study period at CHS**. This is to allow time for RPL to be assessed and any variations to unit enrolments completed before the census date; and to ensure that students do not complete units for which they are eligible for RPL.

## 6.7. Accompanying documentation

Applications for RPL on the grounds of successfully completed studies at a recognised higher education or vocational institution **must be supported by the following**:

- original or officially certified copies of academic transcripts and/or testamurs;
- institutional course guides, subject guides, or similar materials that describe the course and subject contents, including learning outcomes; and
- AQF qualifications and providers may be verified using one of the Australian government's registers, such as Training.gov.au (TGA) and the TEQSA National Register;
- Overseas qualifications may be assessed for equivalence in Australia at the time of application using the Country Education Profiles (CEP) online tool.

If official documents are not available, officially certified copies must be presented. Certified copies are official copies that have been authenticated by an awarding body (university or college), or a Justice of Peace or by an authorised agent.

Applications for RPL on the grounds of Uncredentialed learning or relevant work experience require evidence that the relevant Course and Unit Learning Outcomes have been achieved.

For non-formal learning, applicants will be required to supply certified copies of statements from employers, present a portfolio, or demonstrate their competence through an appropriate form of assessment.

## 6.8. Non-English language documentation

Applicants holding an overseas qualification(s) which is not in English must provide the original transcripts and testamur(s) and submit approved translations of those documents. CHS will only accept translations by National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI) or other officially recognised translators or by the CHS authorised agent network.

## 7. Credit Limitations

Credit limitations governing appropriate and relevant credit apply to all College courses. Credit will not be granted for courses or units completed more than seven years before the date of the credit application and will not be granted for work experience completed more than five years before the date of submission of the application for credit.

## 8. Recording of Awarded Credit

Specified, unspecified or block credit awarded to a student towards studies with CHS will be recorded on the student's academic transcript and assigned the applicable grade as follows:

- Credit awarded through credit transfer, RPL or articulation will be assigned the grade of 'Advanced Standing'
- Block credit may be recorded as "Credit granted for ... units" under the course for which credit was awarded.

Credit awarded by CHS will not be given a mark and will not be included in the calculation of the grand weighted average mark (GWAM).

Credit awarded to an international student who is still to commence study with CHS will also be recorded in the Australian Government's international student management system (PRISMS) and on the Confirmation of Enrolment which is issued to the international student before the student visa is granted.

Credit awarded to an international student that has commenced studies with CHS will also be recorded in PRISMS as required under Section 19 of the ESOS Act 2000. Where the award of credit shortens the required duration of study for the course, CHS is required to adjust the international student's course completion date in PRISMS. This may affect the international student's visa entitlements.

## 9. Appeals

Appeals against decisions involving applications for credit should use the process identified in the CHS Grievances and Appeals Policy.

Appeals must:

- (a) respond to the information provided with the decision explaining the basis of their argument for additional credit which must include specific reference to evidence that they believe has not been considered;
- (b) be lodged within 10 (ten) working days of receipt of the initial decision.

The Dean will respond to credit appeals within 10 (ten) working days of receipt of the appeal. If the student is not satisfied with the outcome of their credit appeal they may request further action as detailed in the **CHS Student Grievance and Appeals Policy**. The College shall maintain a student's enrolment while their Credit appeal is being investigated through both internal and external process as set out in this policy. All Credit appeal outcomes are recorded in the CHS Student Management System and in the **Student Grievances Register**.

## 10. Records

Records associated with this policy will be maintained according to the ***CHS Student Academic Records Management Policy*** and Record Retention and Disposal Schedule.

## 11. Related Documents

- CHS Graduation Transcripts and Testamurs Policy
- CHS Assessment Policy
- CHS Student Academic Records Management Policy

## 12. Related legislation

- Higher Education Support Act 2003
- Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) Act 2011
- TEQSA Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2015
- Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act 2000 and National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 (National Code 2018)
- Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF).