

Advanced Standing and Recognition of Prior Learning Policy

Section 1 - Purpose and Scope

(1) Southern Cross University acknowledges that learning occurs in many different contexts and settings, as prescribed in national standards including the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF).

(2) The purpose of this Policy is to provide equitable and consistent principles to underpin the University's Advanced Standing and Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) processes. The Policy aims to:

- a. recognise prior learning and enable advanced standing to be made readily available to eligible students whilst ensuring the integrity of the University's awards;
- b. maximise the ability of students to move between courses and between institutions;
- c. wherever possible, help students evaluate with confidence their eligibility for advanced standing when they are enrolled in, or seek admission to, a specific SCU course;
- d. enable the equivalence of learning outcomes to be established between applicants' prior learning experiences and the University's awards; and
- e. enable students to minimise course completion times by recognising their prior learning.

(3) This Policy applies to undergraduate and postgraduate coursework awards (including double and combined degrees). Its application extends to articulation agreements with onshore and offshore collaborations and other providers.

Section 2 - Definitions

(4) For the purpose of this Policy please refer to the [Academic Board's Definitions Policy](#).

Section 3 - Policy Statement

Part A - Granting of Credit Towards a Qualification

(5) A student may apply and be considered for Advanced Standing at any time from the date of their application until prior to the commencement of the student's final study period for their award.

(6) A student may be granted advanced standing in the form of credit towards an award at SCU. The University may recognise applications for advanced standing for:

- a. formal learning, including:
 - i. an application for an advanced standing precedent published as a result of:
 - a recognised credit transfer arrangement;
 - a previous advanced standing decision; or

- a provider articulation agreement;
- ii. an individual application for advanced standing application based upon a previous complete or incomplete qualification i.e. a stand-alone advanced standing decision; and/or
- b. informal or non-formal learning.

(7) Eligibility for advanced standing or credit does not in any way imply or guarantee that an applicant seeking admission to a course will be offered a place in that course.

(8) Advanced Standing will be awarded against whole units only, and as specified units or unspecified credit points. Wherever possible, credit will be awarded in specified units.

(9) Credit will only be granted for informal or non-formal learning where the applicant is able to demonstrate equivalent skills, knowledge and application of skills and knowledge to the learning outcomes that would be gained if relevant studies at the University were undertaken.

Limitations when Granting Credit Towards a Qualification

(10) Advanced standing will not be granted for the research components of 3+1 or embedded Honours awards.

(11) Advanced standing shall not be granted for units completed within an enabling (or bridging) program, except where that program is part of a course of study accredited by the University.

(12) If a student chooses to exit a course with a lesser award, they cannot receive credit for more than the maximum amounts specified in clauses (24) and (25) of this Policy for the equivalent exit award.

(13) Students will not be granted advanced standing in a postgraduate award for units previously completed in an undergraduate award, except where that award is a nested award.

(14) For professionally accredited courses in disciplines such as Education, Engineering, Health Science, and Law, Schools may at their discretion restrict the assessment of Recognised Prior Learning to units considered equivalent in a course at another accredited institution.

(15) Advanced standing will not be granted for prior formal learning in units or equivalents for which an applicant received grades other than satisfied requirements or a Pass Grade (or equivalent grade) or higher.

(16) Credit granted on the basis of advanced standing for prior learning does not contribute to calculation of a student's grade point average (GPA).

(17) Units for which Credit is granted on the basis of advanced standing are not used in GPA calculations for purposes of considering student progress or the award of Medals and Prizes.

Part B - Assessing Advanced Standing

Hierarchy of Advanced Standing Arrangements

(18) Advanced Standing is assessed in the following order:

- a. advanced standing articulated in [Specific Award Rules](#);
- b. published advanced standing precedents;
- c. stand-alone advanced standing decisions based upon the principles defined in this Policy and Advanced Standing and Recognition of Prior Learning Procedure;
- d. contractual arrangements between SCU and other providers not published as an advanced standing precedent.

(19) Where a precedent for advanced standing does not exist, the decision to grant advanced standing will be made as a stand-alone decision by the relevant course coordinator or Chair of School Board, after consultation with the relevant Course Coordinator, where applicable (see Part C -).

Demonstrated Equivalence to Existing Unit

(20) Decisions about advanced standing must be informed by considered professional judgement about the evidence presented to demonstrate equivalence to an existing unit of study, and determined in accordance with this Policy and the Advanced Standing and Recognised Prior Learning Procedures .

(21) Where doubt exists for a particular decision, it is preferable to offer alternative means of establishing the student's standing such as challenge tests and special projects rather than to decline the application outright.

Recency of Qualification(s)

(22) Formal qualifications or units completed more than ten (10) years prior to application for advanced standing or entry to an award (whichever occurs first), will not be recognised for the granting of advanced standing unless the applicant can establish that these studies have provided the basis for continuing and recent employment in a relevant occupation. Exceptions to this principle will remain at the discretion of the relevant course co-ordinator.

(23) Assessments of advanced standing documentation must include a statement that addresses the currency of previous qualifications.

Part C - Authorities for Approving Advanced Standing

Course Coordinators

(24) A Course Coordinator may grant a student Advanced Standing as follows:

- a. the maximum advanced standing that can be granted for undergraduate awards of up to one year in duration (up to 96 credit points) is 50%;
- b. the maximum advanced standing that can be granted for a two year undergraduate award (192 credit points) is 50% (96 credit points);
- c. the maximum advanced standing that can be granted in a three year (288 credit point) undergraduate award is 66% (192 credit points);
- d. the maximum advanced standing that can be granted in a four year undergraduate award (384 credit points) is 75% (288 credit points); and
- e. the maximum advanced standing that can be granted towards a coursework postgraduate program is 50 % of the total credit points for the award, except where the award is a nested award.

(25) A Course Coordinator may approve advanced standing precedents provided the precedent does not allow for the provision of advanced standing above the maximums specified at clause (24).

Chair of School Board

(26) Advanced Standing over the maximums specified at clause (24) may be approved by the relevant Chair of School Board, after consultation with the relevant Course Coordinator, who must report such approval to the relevant School Board for noting at its next meeting and for forwarding to Academic Board for noting.

(27) A Chair of School Board may approve advanced standing precedents for the provision of advanced standing above the maximums specified at clause (24), provided such approval is reported to the relevant School Board for noting at its next meeting and subsequently forwarded to Academic Board for noting.

Articulation Agreements

(28) Agreements with other onshore and offshore institutions which establish the amount of credit to be granted to all applicants having completed specified previous formal studies may be approved by:

- a. the relevant Course Coordinator where the full provision of advanced standing under the agreement is within the maximums specified at clause (24); or
- b. the Chair of School Board following consideration by the relevant Course Coordinator where the full provision of advanced standing under the agreement is above the maximums specified at clause (24). Such approval must be reported to the relevant School Board for noting at its next meeting and for forwarding to Academic Board for noting.

Part D - Appeals

(29) Students who are dissatisfied with the outcome of an application for advanced standing may appeal to the relevant Head of School.

(30) The decision of the Head of School is final within the University.

Part E - Accountability and Quality Assurance

(31) Any committee or person with delegated responsibility for making these decisions must make an annual report to the Academic Board, through their School/College Board, about the decisions that have been taken. The annual report should identify any issues, procedural and academic and comment on the effectiveness of the implementation of this policy.

(32) All advanced standing precedents based upon articulation agreements must be reviewed no less than every three years.

(33) Reviews of articulation agreement precedents must be submitted to the DVC and Chair of Academic Board for consideration.

(34) The DVC and Chair of Academic Board will consider such Reports and, if necessary consult with relevant decision-makers, prior to making recommendations regarding the viability of such agreements and whether they should continue.

(35) The School/College Board shall review annually the academic progress being made by students granted advanced standing to ensure that their progress is not significantly different than that of other students.

Part F - Record Keeping

(36) Records of all decisions taken regarding the granting of Advanced Standing must be maintained in the Student Management System. At a minimum, these records will include the following:

- a. details of the decision to approve or not approve;
- b. the student's study plan;
- c. the application by the student for advanced standing and all associated documents provided; and
- d. names of staff approving advanced standing.

(37) All advanced standing precedents resulting from a qualification linkage, articulation agreement or collaboration agreement must be registered in the University's pathways database prior to their implementation in the Student Management System.

(38) All advanced standing precedents proposed as the result of stand-alone advanced standing decisions must be communicated to the Director of Student Services (or nominee). They will be implemented only where it is appropriate and technically possible to do so.

Section 4 - Procedures

(39) See the Advanced Standing and Recognised Prior Learning Procedures .

Section 5 - Guidelines

(40) Nil

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