

# 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:

- a. provide equitable and consistent principles to underpin the assessment of prior learning and award of Advanced Standing;
- b. recognise prior learning and enable advanced standing to be made readily available to eligible students whilst ensuring the integrity of the University's awards;
- c. wherever possible, help applicants and students evaluate their eligibility to have their prior learning recognised via the award of Advanced Standing when they are enrolled in, or seek admission to, a specific University course;
- d. transparently establish equivalence between applicants' and students' prior learning experiences and the learning requirements of the University's awards to inform credit decisions that are consistent and academically defensible;
- e. maximise the ability of students to move between courses, and between both higher education and training institutions, and education sectors;
- f. enhance lifelong learning and student and graduate mobility by allowing individuals to commence their studies at levels of learning that reflect their prior learning; and
- g. permit students to minimise completion times by recognising their prior learning.

### Scope

(3) This Policy applies to undergraduate and postgraduate coursework awards of the University (including double and combined degrees).

## Section 2 - Definitions

(4) For the purposes of this Policy please refer to the [Definitions \(Academic\) Policy](#).

## Section 3 - Policy Statement

### Part A - Applying for Advanced Standing

(5) Applications for Advanced Standing must be submitted according to this Policy and the [Advanced Standing and Recognition of Prior Learning Procedures](#).

(6) Applicants and students may apply to have their prior learning recognised via the award of Advanced Standing at

any time from the date of their application for admission into a University award, until prior to the commencement of the student's final study period for their award.

(7) Students should submit applications prior to commencing their first study session of the course in which they have enrolled, in order to maximise their opportunity to receive Advanced Standing.

(8) Advanced standing applications will not be considered after the published census date for a unit studied by the applicant in that study session.

(9) Applications for advanced standing based on non-formal and informal learning may take longer to assess than those based on formal learning.

(10) The University will notify students of the outcomes of their application via email within 20 working days of the receipt of the application, except where further evidence, clarification or more detailed assessment are required, in which case the University will contact the applicant.

## **Part B - Granting of Credit Towards an SCU Award**

(11) Credit is awarded in the form of credit points. A single unit of study is worth 12 credit points. A double-weighted unit of study is worth 24 credit points.

(12) Credit decisions must be evidence based. Credit will only be granted where students are able to demonstrate equivalent qualities, skills, knowledge and application of skills and knowledge that would be gained if relevant studies at the University were undertaken. Credit will be awarded in a transparent, equitable, and academically defensible manner consistent with the University award structure.

(13) Credit may be awarded for:

- a. formal learning (gained through full or partial achievement of an accredited course/qualification/award) completed at the University or in other learning settings in Australia or overseas; or
- b. non-formal learning (gained through full or partial completion of a structured program of learning which does not lead to an officially accredited qualification); or
- c. informal learning (gained through work, social, family or leisure activities).

(14) Credit decisions will be made:

- a. in accordance with an Advanced Standing precedent established by:
  - i. an articulation arrangement which is underpinned by:
    - a current Qualification Linkage into a named University award;
    - a current Pathway into a named University award;
    - an approved position or occupation or hours of professional level service into a named award.
  - ii. a previous stand-alone credit decision which can be subsequently applied into a named University award; and
- b. as a stand-alone credit decision into a named University award.

(15) Subject to clause (16), Credit will only be awarded against whole units, but may be awarded against:

- a. unspecified elective units or block elective credit points; or
- b. specified units where the units are named; or
- c. a combination of unspecified and specified units or block elective credit points.

(16) Wherever possible, credit will be awarded in specified units.

(17) Credit will not be granted for formal or non-formal learning completed more than ten years prior to application for admission into a University award or application for Advanced Standing (whichever occurs first) unless the applicant/student can establish that their studies have provided the basis for continuing and more recent learning in a relevant field.

(18) Credit will not be granted for the research components of 3+1 year or embedded Honours awards.

(19) Subject to clause (33), if a student chooses to exit a course with a lesser award, previously awarded credit will be rescinded by the University so that the awarded credit does not exceed the maximum allowable under clause (30) of this Policy for the exit award.

(20) Students will not be granted credit in a postgraduate unit for learning previously attained in an undergraduate course/qualification/award, except:

- a. where an award is a nested award; and
- b. where the duration of a Masters award is reduced via the provision of credit for prior learning undertaken in a cognate undergraduate award.

(21) For awards that are professionally recognised or accredited by external professional bodies, organisations or associations, the University may limit the assessment and recognition of prior learning according to the requirements of professional recognition/accreditation.

(22) Credit will not be granted for prior formal and non-formal learning in units for which an individual received an outcome other than competent, satisfied requirements, or a Pass Grade (or equivalent) or higher.

(23) Credit granted for prior learning does not contribute to calculation of a student's grade point average (GPA).

(24) Units for which credit is granted are not used in GPA calculations for purposes of considering student progress or the award of Medals and Prizes.

## **Part C - Assessing Advanced Standing**

### **Hierarchy of Arrangements**

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

- a. Advanced Standing arrangements stated in Specific Award Rules;
- b. Advanced Standing precedents derived from published articulation arrangements;
- c. Advanced Standing precedents derived from previous stand-alone credit decisions; and
- d. stand-alone credit decisions.

### **Demonstrated Equivalence to a University Unit or Award**

(26) For stand-alone credit decisions, content mapping must be undertaken to establish the comparability and equivalence of unit learning outcomes and graduate attributes.

(27) Content mapping is the responsibility of the Course Coordinator who, in consultation with the relevant Unit Assessor/s, will recommend the level of credit to an officer authorised by the Pro Vice Chancellor (Academic Quality).

(28) The content mapping approach must be underpinned by:

- a. subject matter understanding and considered professional judgement of the Course Coordinator and advising Unit Assessor/s about the comparability and equivalence of learning outcomes and graduate attributes within the evidence presented to demonstrate equivalence to a unit or units of study in an SCU award; and
- b. the [Advanced Standing and Recognition of Prior Learning Procedures](#).

(29) Where doubt exists for a particular credit decision, it is preferable to seek a second collegiate opinion and/or offer alternative means of establishing the applicant's/student's standing such as a challenge test or special project rather than to decline the application outright.

## **Part D - Authorities for Approving/Rescinding Credit Decisions**

### **Pro Vice Chancellor (Academic Quality) Approval**

(30) A person authorised in writing by the Pro Vice Chancellor (Academic Quality) may approve credit decisions after consultation with the relevant Course Coordinator up to the following limits:

- a. 50% credit or 48 credit points towards undergraduate awards of up to one year in duration (up to 96 credit points);
- b. 75% credit or 144 credit points towards two year undergraduate awards (192 credit points);
- c. 66% credit or 192 credit points towards three year undergraduate awards (288 credit point);
- d. 75% credit or 288 credit points towards four year undergraduate awards (384 credit points); and
- e. 50% credit towards a coursework postgraduate award, except where the award is a nested award.

(31) The Pro Vice Chancellor (Academic Quality) may withdraw an officer's authorisation to make credit decisions at any time by notifying the relevant officer in writing (including by electronic means).

(32) Where the Pro Vice Chancellor (Academic Quality) determines that a credit decision made by an authorised officer is not sufficiently timely, or does not otherwise accord with the principles contained in this Policy, he or she may take action to correct that decision (including substituting a new decision) to better accord with the principles of this Policy.

(33) Limits on maximum credit may be waived by the Pro Vice Chancellor (Academic Quality) after consultation with the relevant Course Coordinator. Unless the waiver is for a student who is being transferred from one Southern Cross University course to another, the Pro Vice Chancellor (Academic Quality) will report all waiver approvals to the next relevant Faculty Board(s) for noting and for forwarding to Academic Board for noting.

(34) Advanced Standing awarded to International students studying in Australia will be managed in accordance with the [National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018](#), Part B, Standards 2 and 10.

### **Rescinding Credit Awarded Procedures**

(35) A student who has been awarded credit may, at any time prior to the commencement of their final study session, request in writing to have rescinded (withdrawn, overturned or cancelled) part or all of this credit. Such requests will only be approved for sound academic reasons such as the student wishes to undertake the unit or units to:

- a. change direction in their degree; or
- b. improve their GPA to qualify for honours, a Medal or a Prize; or
- c. undertake an approved exchange or study abroad program.

(36) The Pro Vice Chancellor (Academic Quality) or delegate may approve the rescinding of credit. Rescinded credit will not automatically be re-granted.

(37) The rescinding of Advanced Standing awarded to International students studying in Australia will be managed in accordance with the [National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018](#), Part B, Standards 2 and 10.

## **Part E - Record Keeping**

(38) Records of all credit decisions associated with Advanced Standing must be maintained in Student One. At a minimum these records will include the following:

- a. details of the decision to approve/not approve or rescind;
- b. the student's study plan;
- c. the application by the student for Advanced Standing and all supporting documentary evidence provided; and
- d. name(s) of staff approving credit decisions.

(39) Advanced Standing Precedents proposed as the result of stand-alone credit decisions must be communicated to the Director, Student Administration Services.

## **Part F - Accountability and Quality Assurance**

(40) Admissions Committee will review, and report to Academic Board on, the granting of Advanced Standing every two years to ensure consistency in the practices and implementation of this Policy across Faculties and Colleges. The Committee will incorporate benchmarking with other higher education providers to ensure the University's approaches and practices are consistent with the sector.

## **Section 4 - Procedures**

(41) See the [Advanced Standing and Recognition of Prior Learning Procedures](#).

## **Section 5 - Guidelines**

(42) Nil.

## Status and Details

<b>Status</b>	Current
<b>Effective Date</b>	7th December 2018
<b>Review Date</b>	7th August 2021
<b>Approval Authority</b>	Academic Board
<b>Approval Date</b>	7th December 2018
<b>Expiry Date</b>	Not Applicable
<b>Responsible Executive</b>	Brendon Nelson Vice President (Students) and Registrar
<b>Head of Work Unit</b>	Donna Moffitt Director, Student Administration Services +61 2 66203214
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