Recognition of Prior Learning Policy

Section 1 - Purpose and Scope

Purpose

(1) This Policy:

    a. establishes the principles that underpin Southern Cross University's consistent, equitable and transparent approach for assessing the Recognition of Prior Learning for awarding Credit.

    b. supports compliance with the requirements of:

        i. the Australian Qualification Framework; and

        ii. the [Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards)](#) (Student Participation and Attainment).

Scope

(2) This Policy applies to all coursework Awards offered by the University.

Section 2 - Definitions

(3) The following definitions apply for the purpose of this Policy:

    a. Applicant means a person who is making an application for RPL under this Policy.

    b. Articulation means a process that enables students to progress from a completed Award to another Award with predetermined admission and / or Credit arrangements. Articulation is formalised by an approved institutional agreement.

    c. Award means the qualification resulting from successful completion of a specific Course.

    d. Block Credit means Credit granted towards a group of units.

    e. Credit means the value assigned for the recognition of equivalence in Learning Outcomes between different types of learning and / or Awards.

    f. Course means a sequence of study which leads to a higher education Award.

    g. Formal Learning means learning that takes place through a structured program of learning that leads to the full or partial achievement of an officially accredited qualification (AQF Glossary of Terminology).

    h. Informal Learning means learning gained through work, social, family, hobby or leisure activities and experiences. Unlike Formal or Non-Formal Learning, Informal Learning is not organised or externally structured in terms of objectives, time or learning support (AQF Glossary of Terminology).

    i. Learning Outcomes means the expression of the set of knowledge, skills and the application of the knowledge and skills a person has acquired and is able to demonstrate as a result of learning (AQF Glossary of Terminology).

    j. Level: the level of an Award reflects the relative complexity and / or depth of its Course Learning Outcomes, and is expressed according to the various AQF levels. The level at which a unit is taught indicates the amount of prior knowledge required to study it successfully.

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Page 1 of 8

k. Nested Award means a set of Southern Cross University Awards approved by Academic Board that forms stages within the highest Award, where each stage may operate as an entry and / or exit point. Nested Awards are designed to allow full Credit Transfer between the Southern Cross University Awards.

l. Non-Formal Learning means learning that takes place through a structured program of learning but does not lead to an officially accredited qualification (AQF Glossary of Terminology).

m. Prior Learning means learning that is Formal, Informal and / or Non-Formal and which is evidenced, current and relevant, and has taken place:

   i. outside Southern Cross University; and / or

   ii. within a completed Southern Cross University Award.

n. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) means a process that involves assessment of an individual's relevant Prior Learning (including Formal, Informal and Non-Formal learning) to determine eligibility for the granting of Credit.

o. Rescission of Credit means a process whereby a Recognition of Prior Learning decision to grant Credit is overturned.

p. Specified Credit means Credit granted towards a specific unit or units of a Course.

q. Unspecified Credit means Credit granted towards elective unit/s.

r. Volume of Learning means a measure which identifies the notional duration of all activities required for the achievement of the Learning Outcomes specified for a Course. Volume of Learning is expressed in equivalent full-time years.

Section 3 - Policy Context

(4) The University acknowledges that learning can take place outside the formal education system, and that recognising Formal, Informal and Non-Formal learning supports an individual's lifelong learning goals.

(5) The overarching principle of this Policy is to preserve the integrity and distinctiveness of the University's Awards while recognising an Applicant's Prior Learning.

(6) Within this principle, the University also aims to:

a. support mobility between institutions, and progression through levels of qualifications;

b. support an individual's lifelong learning goals by recognising Prior Learning and experiences;

c. ensure consistency and transparency in the process and standards applied to recognising Prior Learning; and

d. establish a framework for recognising Prior Learning in formal Articulation agreements between the University and other institutions.

Section 4 - Policy

(7) The assessment of Prior Learning for the purposes of awarding Credit will be evidence-based, equitable and academically defensible. The precise nature of the evidence-based assessment may vary from discipline to discipline and assessments will be made on the merit of each individual case. The Recognition of Prior Learning by the University will usually reduce the required Volume of Learning for a Course.

(8) The University may, at its discretion, set additional requirements for the Recognition of Prior Learning, including testing, interviews, and portfolio submission. More information about the criteria for assessment of Prior Learning is available in the Assessing Recognition of Prior Learning Applications Procedure.

(9) Eligibility for Credit towards a Course does not guarantee admission to that Course, as there may be other entry requirements that have not been met or Course places may be limited.

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Page 2 of 8

(10) Eligibility for Credit does not change English language requirements.

(11) Professional accreditation and registration requirements may impact on whether Credit is available for some Courses.

(12) Credit will 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.

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

(14) 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.

(15) 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.

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

(17) Units for which credit is granted are not used in GPA calculations for purposes of considering student progress or the award of academic medals or prizes.

Internal Course transfer

(18) If a student transfers from one Southern Cross University Course to another, Credit approved for the original Course may not automatically transfer to the new Course due to professional accreditation / registration or other discipline-specific requirements.

(19) Exceptions to this are:

a. there is an approved Articulation Agreement in place which covers the transfer between the two Courses;
b. previously granted Credit is for a unit which is common to both Courses or considered comparable across both Courses.

(20) Students are encouraged to seek advice on this when applying for internal Course transfer and may be required to re-apply for Credit in the new Course.

Section 5 - Types of Credit

(21) Block Credit, where the Applicant's Prior Learning is assessed as being at an appropriate Level and standard relevant to the University's offerings and meeting the Learning Outcomes for a group of units.

(22) Unspecified Credit, where the Applicant's Prior Learning is assessed as being at an appropriate Level and standard relevant to the University's units offered as electives.

(23) Specified Credit, where the Applicant's Prior Learning is assessed as meeting the Learning Outcomes for a specific unit, or units.

Currency

(24) Prior Learning that has been attained within ten years of the date of application for Credit will generally be considered current.

(25) Where Applicants request Credit for formal or non-formal learning completed more than ten years of the date of application, they must establish that their studies have provided the basis for continuing and more recent learning in a relevant field.

(26) Courses subject to the requirements of external professional accreditation bodies may require more recent Prior Learning.

Relevancy

(27) Prior Learning will be considered relevant where there is evidence to demonstrate that the Applicant has achieved a standard of learning comparable to the level of the learning outcomes of the Award.

Block Credit

(28) Prior Learning will be considered relevant for the granting of Block Credit where there is evidence that:

   a. the Applicant has achieved a quality and standard of learning equivalent to tertiary studies;
   b. the Prior Learning is of an appropriate Level; and
   c. the Applicant can demonstrate the attainment of the Learning Outcomes of a group of units.

Unspecified Credit

(29) Prior Learning will be considered for the granting of Unspecified Credit at a particular Level where there is evidence to demonstrate that:

   a. the Applicant has achieved a quality and standard of learning equivalent to tertiary studies; and
   b. the Prior Learning is assessed as being at an appropriate Level relevant to the University's offerings.

Specified Credit

(30) Prior Learning will be considered for the granting of Specified Credit where there is evidence to demonstrate that:

   a. the Applicant has achieved a quality and standard of learning equivalent to tertiary studies;
   b. the Prior Learning is of an appropriate Level;
   c. the Applicant can demonstrate the attainment of the Learning Outcomes of a specific unit or units; and

Minimum Study Requirements at Southern Cross University

(31) The maximum external Credit allowed towards a Southern Cross University Award will be determined by the requirement that the student complete a minimum amount of the Award at Southern Cross University.

(32) The minimum study requirements at Southern Cross University are as follows:

   a. 48 credit points (50%) of an undergraduate award of one year duration (96 credit points);
   b. 48 credit points (25%) of an undergraduate award of two years duration (192 credit points);
   c. 96 credit points (33%) of an undergraduate award of three years duration (288 credit points);
   d. 96 credit points (25%) of an undergraduate award of four years duration (384 credit points); and

e. 50% of a coursework postgraduate award, except where the award is a nested award.

(33) The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic Quality) may approve awarding Credit in excess of those set out in the Minimum Requirements based on a mapping of Unit Learning Outcomes and recommendation by the Course Coordinator. These determinations are to be reported to Academic Standards and Quality Committee.

(34) Limits on maximum Credit as set out above do not apply to approved Southern Cross University Nested Awards.

Rescission of Credit

(35) Credit may be rescinded at the request of the Applicant prior to, or after, Course commencement.

(36) Rescission of Credit after Course commencement must be academically justified.

(37) Credit will not be rescinded for the purpose of extending an Applicant's duration of study.

(38) Credit cannot be rescinded for a unit successfully completed, or for a pre-requisite where the post-requisite unit has been successfully completed.

(39) Credit may also be rescinded by the University in the following circumstances:

a. Credit was granted on false or misleading information provided by the student; or
b. Where it is required due to a major change in a Course, Specialisation or Major, including withdrawal of a Course requiring Course transfer.

(40) The rescinding of Credit 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.

Appeal

(41) An Applicant may appeal a decision regarding the assessment of Prior Learning or the rescission of Credit.

(42) Grounds for an appeal are limited to procedural error or breach of procedural fairness.

(43) Appeals must be in writing and submitted to the relevant Associate Dean (Education)for determination.

(44) All appeals must be submitted within ten working days of the determination notification to students.

Section 6 - Quality Assurance

(45) The University will safeguard the quality of its Awards by ensuring that:

a. the assessment of Prior Learning for Credit Transfer is evidence-based, and ensures that the Learning Outcomes have been met;
b. Credit granted on the basis of learning completed within and outside Southern Cross University is not recorded with a grade and does not contribute to any Grade Point Average (GPA);
c. Credit on the basis of prior Formal Learning is only granted for completed units where the final grade is a Pass, or equivalent grade, and higher;
d. Grades of 'concessional pass', 'terminating pass' or equivalent, from another higher education institution, will not be deemed to be successful completion for the purpose of Credit, unless supported by additional information and approved on a case-by-case basis;

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Page 5 of 8

e. Credit granted by another institution on the basis of Prior Learning is not transferable to Southern Cross University unless the original Prior Learning on which the Credit is based is also assessed by Southern Cross University;

f. Standards for the assessment of Prior Learning are regularly reviewed and monitored by the Academic Standards and Quality Committee (ASQC);

g. Decisions to award/not award Credit are reviewed periodically for consistency and adherence to the policy requirements.

h. Staff with responsibilities for assessing Recognition of Prior Learning are provided with appropriate training and support.

Section 7 - Records Management

(46) Records of all Credit decisions must be maintained in Student One and include the following information, as a minimum:

a. Details of the decision to approve, not approve or rescind Credit;

b. The application by the student and all supporting documentary evidence provided; and

c. The name/s of staff approving Credit decisions.

Section 8 - Roles and Responsibilities

(47) The following roles and responsibilities are allocated under this Policy and its supporting Procedures.

Role	Responsibility
Academic Board	Set Southern Cross University Minimum Study Requirements
Academic Board	Amend Southern Cross University Minimum Study Requirements
Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic Quality)	Grant Credit in excess of the SCU Minimum Study Requirements Report Credit granted in excess of the SCU Minimum Study Requirements to Academic Standards and Quality Committee
Academic Standards and Quality Committee	Receive Report on Credit granted in excess of the SCU Minimum Study Requirements
Director, Student Administration Services	Resource and oversee training for Student Administration Services staff assessing applications for RPL
Discipline Chair/Associate Dean (Education)	Ensure academic staff assessing applications for RPL are trained and supported.
Assessing Recognition of Prior Learning	
Student/Prospective Student	Apply for RPL Apply to rescind Credit Request review of an RPL Determination
Associate Dean (Education)	Consider and determine a request to review a decision re awarding or rescinding credit
Senior Manager, Student Management	Determine requests for rescission of Credit, seeking advice from Course Coordinators as relevant.

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Page 6 of 8

Student Administration Services (Client Services)	Assess RPL request Assess Rescind Credit request Determine RPL request if in precedent data base Determine Rescission of Credit request, where appropriate. Direct Credit requests to Faculty/College as required. Record Faculty/College decision and rationale to data base Maintain RPL Credit Database Record keeping – updating student records decisions and reason for decision Notify students of determination
Course Coordinators – Faculty/Colleges	Where not covered in precedent data base, assess request for RPL by mapping learning outcomes to unit/course. Advise Student Administration Services/Admissions of determination and reason for determination
Articulation Arrangement	
Proposer of Articulation Arrangement	Conduct due diligence Prepare submission Seek endorsement of proposer Submit to Discipline Chair for endorsement
Discipline Chair	Support/require changes/reject proposed Articulation Arrangement Ensure academic staff involved in making determinations are adequately trained and are aware of policy requirements
Executive Dean	Approve/require changes/reject proposed Articulation Arrangement Communicate Decision to Proposer and Student Services Approve continuation of an Articulation Arrangement
Student Administration Services (Client Services)	Record Articulation Arrangement on RPL Credit Database
Course Coordinator	Monitor academic progression of student cohort of Articulation Arrangement and report to Academic Quality Standards Committee Review Articulation Arrangement 6 months prior to its expiry and recommend continuation/discontinuation to Exec Dean
Academic Standards and Quality Committee	Review reports on academic progress of student cohort in Articulation Arrangements
Course Coordinators	Prior to commencing course/unit changes, consider impact on existing Articulation Arrangements.
Office of Business Quality Intelligence	Conducts periods reviews on decisions to award credit

Section 9 - Procedures

(48) The following Procedures support implementation of this Policy:

   a. Recognition of Prior Learning Assessment Procedures; and

   b. Development of Articulation and Related Credit Arrangements Procedure.

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Page 7 of 8

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