

Credit and Exemption Procedure



1 Purpose

To set out the requirements for how Credit and Exemptions are granted for prior Formal, Informal and Non-formal Learning.

To find the version of the Credit and Exemption Procedure in force up to and including 4 April 2022, [click here](#).

2 Scope

This procedure applies to:

1. Individual applications from Domestic and International Students and applications made for all Coursework Programs and Coursework components of Higher Degree by Research (HDR) programs offered by the University; and
2. negotiated Credit Transfer Arrangements between the University and another education provider that provide Students with agreed and consistent Credit outcomes for components of a qualification.

For Articulation Arrangements that allow a Student to progress from a completed program of study with another education provider to a University program, please refer to the Articulation Arrangements Procedure (*under development*).

3 Procedure Overview

This procedure outlines University requirements and processes for assessing, granting and monitoring Credit and Exemptions.

4 Procedures

A Student or Applicant may wish the University to recognise prior Formal, Informal or Non-formal Learning that they have achieved elsewhere. If recognised, this may allow the University to grant:

1. Credit - where a number of Units, up to a specified limit, may be granted towards a

University Award. Credit reduces the number of Courses required to complete an Award Program;

2. Exemptions - where a Student is released from the requirement to complete a specific required Course as a result of having previously demonstrated competence in the subject matter of that Course but Credit cannot be given, for example, due to professional accreditation/ registration requirements. Note: Exemptions do not reduce the overall number of Courses needed to complete the Award Program. The Student will need to complete an alternative Course; or
3. Admission - where prior Formal, Informal and Non-formal Learning may be used for the Admission requirements to a Program, including satisfying Pre-requisite or prior study requirements. Admission may be with or without Credit.

4.1 Methods for granting of Credit

Credit in a University Award Program is granted for:

- Block Credit towards whole stages of the program (e.g. a semester or a year of full-time study);
- Specified Credit towards particular components of the program where prior learning is equivalent to Core or Elective Courses; or
- Unspecified Credit towards Elective Courses in the program, where applicable, when there are no equivalent Core Courses in the University program.

4.2 General conditions for granting of Credit

Eligibility for Credit does not guarantee an Applicant automatic entry into a University Award Program.

Credit may only be granted towards whole Courses.

Credit is only granted if:

1. Students will not be disadvantaged in achieving the expected Learning Outcomes of the program of study by the granting of Credit; and
2. the integrity of the program of study and the qualification are maintained, including being consistent with the requirements of the Australian Qualifications Standard (AQF) for that level of study.

Credit will not be granted:

1. for Courses where the Final Grade received was a conceded or concessional pass, or their equivalents;
2. for partially completed Courses or for which a finalised Grade has not been received;
3. if the Applicant or Student will exceed the maximum Credit limits specified in section 4.4;
or
4. where conditions of professional accreditation or registration bodies do not allow for granting of the Credit.

4.3 Currency of prior learning

Specified Credit can only be granted for prior learning completed within 10 years of the time of application for Credit.

To determine if the prior learning is deemed to be current, the relevant year is:

1. for prior Formal Learning, the year of completion of a Course; and
2. for prior Informal or Non-formal Learning, the most recent year of the experience or learning.

A shorter time limit for availability of Specified Credit may be set by the relevant Associate Dean (Academic) where there have been significant discipline advances such that an extended break from study may pose a risk to Students, staff or the public or in order to meet professional registration or accreditation requirements. Time limits may also be shorter for work integrated learning Courses and in post-graduate qualifications.

Unspecified Credit towards Elective Courses or other optional components in the Award Program can be granted for learning completed more than 10 years before the time of application for Credit.

The relevant Associate Dean (Academic) may approve the granting of Specified Credit outside of the time limits in exceptional cases. In considering cases for Credit for studies completed more than 10 years earlier, evidence of substantial relevant experience during the intervening period may be taken into account.

4.4 Supporting documentation

All supporting documentation must be in English. Documents in a language other than English

must be accompanied by certified translations. The University reserves the right to request the original documents, and the right to contact institutions and agencies for additional information or verification of the authenticity of documentation.

Where an Applicant or Student is unable to provide documentary evidence of prior learning, the relevant Associate Dean (Academic) may, at their discretion, allow the Applicant or Student to complete an alternate form of Assessment to enable their Learning Outcomes to be assessed.

4.5 Limits on granting Credit

Students must complete a certain minimum proportion of their program at the University to be awarded a qualification from the University. The table of Credit limits below shows the maximum number of Units that will be granted towards a program leading to a University Award where the source of the Credit is:

1. Courses completed at another institution;
2. prior Informal or Non-formal Learning.

Level of qualification	Total number of Units required for a University qualification	Maximum number of Units for which external Credits may be granted	Minimum amount of the program that must be completed at the University
Undergraduate Certificate	4	2	One-half (2 Units)
Diploma	8	4	One-half (4 Units)
Associate Degree	16	8	One-half (8 Units)
Bachelor Degree - 3 years	24	16	One-third (8 Units)
Bachelor Degree - 4 years	32	24	One-quarter (8 Units)
Bachelor Honours Degree: embedded - 4 years*	32	24	One-quarter (8 Units)
Bachelor Honours Degree: end-on*	8	2	Three-quarters (6 Units)
Double/Combined Degree	32 (already reduced from 48)	16*	One-half (16 Units)
Double/Combined	40 (already reduced	24*	Two-fifths (16 Units)

Degree - including a Bachelor Honours Degree*	from 56)		
Graduate Certificate	4	2	One-half (2 Units)
Graduate Diploma	8	4	One-half (4 Units)
Coursework Master Degree	12	6	One-half (6 Units)
Coursework Master Degree - extended	16	8	One-half (8 Units)
Graduate entry professional degree - 3 years	24	12	One-half (12 Units)
Research Degree*	The Graduate Research School will assess applications for Credit on a case-by-case basis and a determination will be made by the Associate Dean (Graduate Research School)		

* *Credit will not be granted for the project/dissertation components of the program.*

Subject to the conditions set out in sections 4.2 and 4.3, maximum Credit limits do not apply where:

1. the Student internally transfers from one incomplete University program to another and there are Courses in common or contributing as Unspecified Credit towards Elective Courses in the program;
2. the Student is moving from the lower level of a Nested Qualification to an associated higher level qualification at the University, whether or not the lesser Award has been conferred. Examples are a Student moving from an Associate Degree to the associated Bachelor Degree, or from a Graduate Certificate to the associated Master Degree. Where these are part of a Nested Qualification arrangement, the Student will receive full Credit for the lower level Award;
3. the Student is part of a cohort of Students transferred by the University into a new program through a program transfer;
4. the Student is transferring from a Double Degree program to a component single degree of that program or vice-versa; or
5. that Credit is being transferred to a University exit Award.

The Associate Dean (Academic) may approve the granting of Credit beyond the maximum limits

in exceptional cases.

4.6 Applications for Credit for prior Formal Learning

Individuals in the following circumstances will have their applications for Credit processed as part of their application for Admission to a program of the University, and are not required to complete a separate application:

1. Students enrolled in domestic or international pathway programs under a formal Credit Transfer Arrangement with the University
2. former University Students seeking re-entry into an incomplete Award Program or entry into an associated higher level qualification in a Nested Qualification arrangement.

All other Students and Applicants are required to complete an application for Credit for prior Formal Learning. This includes Students who have been awarded Credit or Exemptions for a particular program and transfer to a different program.

Domestic Applicants applying to study with the University via QTAC will need to complete an Application for Credit and lodge it directly with the University. Applicants applying directly to the University are provided with a link to an application for Credit in their letter of offer.

Credit applications may be lodged before or after Admission to the program. However, unless there are exceptional circumstances, applications should be lodged in time for the Credit application to be assessed and the Applicant notified prior to the last day that a Student is able to Enrol in the Course for which Credit is being sought. Where applications are lodged after this date, there is no guarantee that the Program structure will allow for the Credit to be granted.

Applications for Credit for prior Formal Learning from prospective International Students are lodged with USQ International at the time of applying for Admission to the University.

Applications for Credit based on prior Formal Learning must include:

1. a verifiable copy of the official Academic Transcript showing the Course(s) completed, year of completion, Grade obtained (including details of the grading system), and weighting or Unit value of the Course(s) as a portion of the total program; and
2. extracts from institutional handbooks, Course guides or equivalent, showing Course content, contact or instruction hours, Learning Outcomes and Assessment activities for the Course(s) for which Credit is being sought.

Where the prior Formal Learning took place at the University, accompanying official documents do not need to be supplied.

Applicants or Students may withdraw their application for Credit by written request to usq.support@usq.edu.au at any time prior to the Credit being approved and published in the Student Centre.

4.6.1 Assessment of Credit application

For Coursework Programs where there are no recorded precedents, the relevant Program Director is responsible for assessing applications for Credit. Where an application for Credit is denied by the Program Director, the decision will be reviewed by the relevant Associate Dean (Academic).

For HDR programs, the Associate Dean (Graduate Research School) is responsible for assessing and approving Credit, normally in conjunction with the supervisory team.

Based on the evidence received of prior Formal Learning, Credit will only be granted where the relevant Program Director or Associate Dean (Academic) is satisfied that:

1. the integrity of the qualification outcomes and discipline requirements are maintained, including being consistent with the requirements of the AQF for that level of study, and any other requirements, such as professional accreditation; and
2. granting Credit will not impinge on the Applicant's or Student's likely successful completion of the qualification.

4.6.2 Credit arrangements with registered providers

Requests for Credit Transfer Arrangements or Block Credit arrangements that provide Students with agreed Credit outcomes for components of a qualification from another education provider will be assessed by the relevant Associate Dean (Academic) who will take into account the comparability and equivalence of content, Learning Outcomes, volume of study, and learning and Assessment approaches.

The faculty will advise the education provider of the outcome of the assessment.

All Credit Transfer Arrangements with other education providers will be recorded in the Credit precedent database.

4.6.3 Cross-institutional and Student mobility arrangements

Current Students of the University may also apply to undertake studies for Credit through another institution. This can be undertaken as part of the University's Study Abroad or Exchange Program, or through cross-institutional Enrolment. These programs may contribute to program completion within the restrictions set out in Section 4.5.

Students who wish to participate in a Study Abroad or Exchange Program should submit an online enquiry form available from the University's Study Abroad webpage. Students wishing to

enquire about Cross-institutional Study should contact their faculty.

4.6.4 Credit precedents

Where an application for Credit based on prior Formal Learning is approved by the Program Director or Associate Dean (Academic), the decision will be recorded as a Credit precedent in the Credit precedent database and is automatically applied to subsequent Credit applications based on the same prior Formal Learning.

4.7 Applications for Credit for prior Informal or Non-formal Learning

Credit for prior Informal or Non-formal Learning for a University Award Program can be granted for Specified Credit towards particular components of the program where there are equivalent Core or Elective Courses.

Where an Applicant or Student has previously demonstrated competence in the subject matter of a particular Course but Credit cannot be given, for example, due to professional accreditation or registration requirements, the Applicant or Student will be granted an Exemption from the requirement to complete the Course.

Applications for Credit for prior Informal and Non-formal Learning must include verifiable evidence of the Applicant's or Student's competency or capability, in support of the application.

For Specified Credit, Applicants or Students must individually address each of the Course Learning Outcomes for every Course for which they are applying for Credit. These are listed under each Course offer in the University Handbook available from the University website.

All supporting documentation should clearly show that the Applicant or Student has achieved and maintained the competencies, knowledge and skills inherent in the qualification being recognised. Evidence must be valid, sufficient and authentic, and the University may require references to assist in authenticating claims.

Applicants or Students may withdraw their application for Credit by written request to usq.support@usq.edu.au at any time prior to the Credit being approved and published in the Student Centre.

4.7.1 Assessment of Credit application for prior Informal or Non-formal Learning

Based on the evidence received of prior Informal or Non-formal Learning, Credit will only be granted where:

1. the integrity of qualification outcomes and discipline requirements are maintained, including being consistent with the requirements of the AQF for that level of study, and any other requirements, such as professional accreditation; and
2. granting Credit will not impinge on the Student's likely successful completion of the

qualification.

4.8 Outcome of Credit application

Applications for Credit for prior Formal Learning will normally be assessed within 10 University Business Days. Applications for Credit for prior Informal or Non-formal Learning will normally be assessed within 20 University Business Days. A longer period may be required where a full assessment is needed, particularly at peak Admission and Enrolment times.

The outcome of an application for Credit will include the type and the amount of Credit and Exemptions granted and options for review. Advice in relation to Credit is not binding unless advised in writing as an outcome of a formal application process.

Applicants or Students may elect not to receive some or all of the Credit to which they are entitled. When Credit has been rejected by a Student, the Student may request that it be reinstated however this Decision will be at the discretion of the relevant faculty. When considering a request to reinstate previously rejected Credit, the faculty may consider changes to the Student's study plans and any other changed circumstances that may be relevant.

Where international Applicants apply for Credit for Formal Learning in their application for Admission, normally they will be advised of the outcome in their letter of offer. The Applicant must reply authorising acceptance of the Credit. If authorisation is not received from the Applicant, the Credit will not be processed.

4.9 Recording of Credit and Exemptions

Where Credit or Exemptions are awarded, they will be recorded on the Student's Academic Transcript.

Grades achieved in Courses completed at other institutions for which Credit is granted for prior Formal Learning are not recorded on the University Academic Transcript and are not included in the calculation of a Student's Grade Point Average.

Grades achieved in Courses completed at the University for which Credit is granted will be recorded on the University Academic Transcript and are also included in the calculation of a Student's Grade Point Average, in accordance with the Grades Procedure.

Where a Student has already completed a stand-alone Award, any Credit granted towards a subsequent University program is subject to the general Credit conditions and limits outlined in sections 4.2 and 4.3. In this case, Grades are not recorded on the University Academic Transcript and are not included in the calculation of a Student's Grade Point Average.

Where a Student has completed an Award as part of a Nested Qualification and moves to a higher level Award in the program set, Grades from the lower level qualification are recorded on the University Academic Transcript and included in the calculation of a Student's Grade Point Average in the higher level qualification, in accordance with the Grades Procedure.

In exceptional cases, the Associate Dean (Academic) may approve the transfer of graded Credit.

4.10 Withdrawal of Credit or Exemptions

University-initiated withdrawal of previously approved Credit or Exemptions is approved by the relevant Associate Dean (Academic) where:

1. Credit or Exemptions were granted through an error in assessment;
2. the documentation provided by the Student is incomplete, fraudulent, misleading or invalid; or
3. the Student changes their study plan (e.g. change of Major or Minor) and previously granted Credit or Exemptions can no longer be applied to the changed study plan.

A Student who has been awarded Credit or Exemptions may request in writing to have part or all of the Credit or Exemptions withdrawn at any time prior to the commencement of their final Teaching Period.

Requests to withdraw Credit or Exemptions made by a Student are considered by the Associate Dean (Academic) for Coursework Programs, or the Associate Dean (Graduate Research School) for HDR programs. Withdrawn Credit or Exemptions will not automatically be re-granted.

Changes made by the University to Credit precedents or Credit Transfer Arrangements must not disadvantage any Applicants with a current offer.

4.11 Quality assurance review cycle

Recorded Credit precedents, including Articulation and Credit Transfer Arrangements, will be reviewed by the relevant faculty-level committee every three (3) years or when there are substantial changes to program or Course objectives, whichever is earlier.

In order to ensure the integrity of Credit decisions, the subsequent academic performance of Student cohorts receiving Credit will be monitored by the relevant faculty and are reviewed as part of the annual Course and program quality assurance process.

Where the University becomes aware of a partner institution in a Credit Transfer Arrangement substantially changing the curriculum for which Credit is given, the Arrangement must be reviewed within three (3) months of the change, or as soon as possible after becoming aware.

Any resulting amendments to Credit precedents must be approved by the relevant Associate Dean (Academic) and the Credit precedent database updated accordingly.

4.12 Grievances

Applicants or Students who are dissatisfied with a decision in relation to Credit and Exemptions may request a review of the decision under the provisions of the Student Grievance Resolution Procedure.

5 References

Nil.

6 Schedules

This procedure must be read in conjunction with its subordinate schedules as provided in the table below.

7 Procedure Information

Accountable Officer	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs)
Responsible Officer	Associate Deans (Academic)
Policy Type	University Procedure
Policy Suite	Enrolment Policy
Subordinate Schedules	
Approved Date	12/5/2022
Effective Date	12/5/2022
Review Date	5/4/2025
Relevant Legislation	Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act (2000) Higher Education Support Act (2003) Higher Education Administrative Information for Providers (AIP) National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018
Related Policies	Admissions Policy Assessment Policy

	<p>Award Eligibility and Graduation Policy</p> <p>Student Grievance Resolution Policy</p>
Related Procedures	<p>Admissions Procedure</p> <p>Arrangements for Third Party Delivery of Coursework Programs Procedure</p> <p>Assessment Procedure</p> <p>Enrolment Procedure</p> <p>Student Academic Progress Procedure</p> <p>Student Appeals Procedure</p> <p>Student Grievance Resolution Procedure</p>
Related forms, publications and websites	<p>Application for Exemption/Credit form</p> <p>Cross-institutional Studies website</p> <p>Study Abroad and Exchange Outbound website</p> <p>AQF Qualifications Framework</p> <p>AQF Qualifications Pathways Policy</p> <p>Recognition website (under development)</p>
Definitions	<p>Terms defined in the Definitions Dictionary</p> <p>Admission</p> <p>The process of submission and assessment of applications for entry to study at the University.</p> <p>Applicant</p> <p>A person who applies for any program or Course of study offered by the University whether the application is made through the Queensland Tertiary Admission Centre (QTAC) or directly to the University.</p> <p>Articulation</p> <p>A method of progression from one completed qualification to another with guaranteed Admission or Credit in a defined pathway.</p>

[Articulation Arrangement](#)

A defined pathway that allows a Student to progress from a completed program of study with another education provider to a University program. Admission to the University program may be with or without Credit.

[Award](#)

The qualification conferred upon a Student following the successful completion of an Academic Program. The categories of Award are listed in the Program Nomenclature Schedule.

[Block Credit](#)

Credit granted towards whole stages or components of a program of learning leading to a qualification (e.g. a semester or a year of full-time study). It is typically arranged through a Credit Transfer or pathways agreement with another educational provider. Block Credit may be Specified or Unspecified Credit.

[Census Date](#)

The date on which the Student's enrolment related requirements must be finalised in line with the University's important dates. A Higher Education Provider must, for each unit of study it provides or proposes to provide during a year, determine for that year, a particular date to be the Census Date for the unit. Students are responsible for meeting the University's Census Date deadline and must check that all enrolment and payment details are correct on or before the Census Date.

[Core Course](#)

A Course that combines introductory discipline knowledge with enabling students to gain skills and knowledge for successful tertiary study and lifelong learning, and provides a foundation for the Graduate Attributes. A Core Course must be passed to fulfil the requirements of the program.

[Course](#)

A discrete element of a program, normally undertaken over a single Teaching Period, in which the Student enrolls, and on completion of which the Student is awarded a grade.

[Coursework](#)

A method of teaching and learning that leads to the acquisition of skills and knowledge and does not include a major research component.

[Credit](#)

The number of units, up to a specified limit, granted towards a University Award on the basis of either previous Formal, Informal or Non-formal Learning. Credit reduces the number of Courses required to complete an Award Program.

[Credit Transfer Arrangement](#)

A negotiated agreement with another educational institution or accrediting authority that provides Students with agreed and consistent Credit outcomes for components of a qualification based on identified equivalence in content and learning outcomes.

[Cross-institutional Study](#)

Study comprising a course or a set of Courses being undertaken with one provider (the host provider) as part of a program of study for which the Student is enrolled with another provider (the home provider).

[Elective](#)

A Course chosen by Students to add value to their degree, either from a list of recommended Courses, or from a range of Courses offered from programs across the university.

[Enrolment](#)

The process of admitting Students to one or more Courses for the current Academic Year.

[Exchange Program](#)

The reciprocal exchange of a Domestic Student with an overseas Student, which is covered by a formal agreement between the Australian Higher Education Provider and an overseas higher education institution that allows both Students to pay for their study under whatever regime applies to them at their home institution.

[Exemption](#)

The release from the requirement to complete a specific required Course but without reducing the overall number of Units required to

complete the program.

[Formal Learning](#)

Takes place through a structured program of learning that leads to the full or partial achievement of an officially accredited qualification.

[Grade \(noun\)](#)

A Grade is a code that indicates the status of the Assessment of Student performance against the learning objectives of a Course.

[Informal Learning](#)

Is 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.

[Major](#)

A coherent set of at least eight (8) which provides depth of study within a specific subject area or discipline.

[Minor](#)

A coherent set of at least four (4) Units which provides a sub-disciplinary focus and allows a Student to extend or complement their Major or Discipline Study Courses.

[Nested Qualifications](#)

A set of programs of study that are offered sequentially and which allows a Student to progress from a lower level qualification into a higher level qualification to enable multiple entry and exit points. Programs at the lower qualification levels are described as 'nested' within the programs leading to qualifications at the higher levels.

[Non-formal Learning](#)

Refers to learning that takes place through a structured program of learning but does not lead to an officially accredited qualification (for example: in-house professional development programs conducted by an employer, education by professional associations, product courses and unaccredited structured training).

[Pre-requisite](#)

A Pre-requisite Course encompasses specific knowledge and skills the Student needs to possess in order to progress to a subsequent nominated Course. As such, it must be completed prior to undertaking the subsequent Course.

[Specified Credit](#)

Credit granted towards particular or specific components of a qualification or program of learning, such as a Core or Elective Course.

[Student](#)

A person who is admitted to an Award Program or Non-Award Program offered by the University and is: currently enrolled in one or more Courses or study units; or not currently enrolled but is on an approved Leave of Absence or whose admission has not been cancelled.

[Teaching Period](#)

The period during which a Course or study unit is offered. Examples of teaching periods include, but are not limited to, semesters, trimesters, blocks, intensives and sessions.

[Unit](#)

This is an indicator of the value of a Course. Most Courses are valued at one Unit. Units are used to track progress towards completing a program. (The term used prior to 2002 to describe a Course)

[University](#)

The term 'University' or 'USQ' means the University of Southern Queensland.

[Unspecified Credit](#)

Credit granted towards elective components of a qualification or program of learning, such as an Elective Course.

Definitions that relate to this procedure only

Keywords

Block Credit, Unspecified Credit, Specified Credit, RPL, recognised prior learning, Credit precedent, Articulation Arrangement, Credit Transfer Agreement, partnerships, Formal Learning, Informal Learning, Non-formal Learning

