
RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING AND CREDIT POLICY

1. Purpose

- 1.1 Ikon Institute of Australia (Ikon) is committed to enabling students access to higher education through a range of pathways.
- 1.2 This policy provides the fair and equitable framework for the granting of credit towards Ikon qualifications based on formal, informal, and non-formal learning, through the processes of credit transfer, recognising an individual's education, skills, and experience, whilst safeguarding the academic integrity and academic standards of Ikon courses.

2. Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to current and prospective students, for all Ikon courses that lead to an AQF qualification.
- 2.2 This policy applies all staff involved in admissions and assessment of credit applications.

3. Related Documents

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

- Application for Recognition of Prior Learning and Credit
- Credit Register
- Assessment Policy
- Domestic Student Admission Policy
- International Student Admission Policy
- Student Academic Progress Policy
- Grievance and Appeals Policy
- Inclusion, Diversity and Equity Policy
- Records Management Policy

This policy and related documents can be accessed via the [Policy and Procedures](#) section of the Ikon website and the student and staff policy libraries.

4. Definitions

“Articulation Agreement” means a partnership between Ikon and another education institution to recognise credits toward a degree.

“Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)” is the framework that identifies learning outcomes for each AQF level and qualification, policy requirements, educational and economic objectives, and governing and monitoring arrangements for courses.

“Block Credit” means the credit granted towards whole stages or components of a course of learning leading to a qualification.

“Credit” means 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 achieve a qualification and may be through credit transfer, articulation, and recognition of prior learning or advanced standing

“Credit Transfer” means the 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.

“Exemption” means a release from specified parts of a subject such as lectures, practicals, tutorials, projects, or any other components of a course including elements of assessment.

“Formal Learning” means the learning that takes place through a structured course of learning that leads to the full or partial achievement of an officially accredited qualification.

“Informal Learning” means the 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.

“Non-Formal Learning” means the learning that takes place through a structured course of learning but does not lead to an officially accredited qualification.

“Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)” means the 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.

“Specified Credit” means credit granted for a specific component of a course where the student has completed curriculum which:

- is substantially the same
- constitutes at least the same proportion of full-time study, and
- the standard attained is substantially the standard required for a pass in the specified course component.

“Unspecified Credit” means the credit granted towards elective components of a qualification or course, where there is no equivalent component in the Ikon course for the work completed elsewhere.

POLICY

5. Principles

5.1 All Ikon higher education courses will align with the AQF and meet the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021.

5.2 The recognition of and granting of credit/ is based on the following principles:

- facilitating opportunities for students to proceed from one level of education/training to the next
- facilitating student progress, completion, and mobility
- recognising knowledge and skills that students already have which meet the learning outcomes or competencies of accredited courses or the subjects within them
- granting maximum recognition for prior learning
- ensuring a consistent and equitable approach to the recognition of prior learning
- ensuring recognition of prior learning and credit transfer provisions and procedures are clear and transparent to students.

5.3 The granting of credit does not guarantee entry into a course at Ikon.

5.4 To maintain the integrity of Ikon’s higher education degrees:

- credit will only be granted based on evidence provided by the applicant
- granting credit will not disadvantage the student in terms of achieving the course learning outcomes.

5.5 Assessment of an application for credit or RPL will meet the requirements of the AQF Qualifications Pathways Policy.

6. Credit Transfer

6.1 Credit transfer applies to granting credit towards an AQF qualification on the grounds of completed parts of another AQF qualification or other verifiable, formal learning at an educational institution.

6.2 Credit can be granted to allow a student to enter a qualification and/or to gain an offset (credit) against components of a qualification. The latter option will result in reduced time (volume of learning) required for a student to complete the qualification.

7. Types of Credit

Block Credit

7.1 Block credit may be granted when a student has completed a formal qualification that is set out in a formal credit agreement with other education providers for award at a particular level to ensure mobility and lifelong learning in line with the AQF Qualifications Pathways Policy.

7.2 The agreement will identify the amount of credit the student is automatically granted at the time of admission due to the level of prior learning. The agreement exempts the student from completing some stages or components within the course. A block credit agreement does not recognise that the student has achieved equivalent subjects, learning outcomes, or content. When establishing a Block Credit Agreement, the subjects being granted credit will be determined through the mapping of desired learning outcomes, with consideration given to facilitating academic progression.

Specified Credit

7.3 Specified credit may be granted based on prior formal learning that is deemed to be equivalent when considering the learning outcomes, volume of learning, course content, and learning and assessment approaches of a specific unit/s of study within a course.

7.4 The degree of equivalence needs to be at least 80%. When approved, specified credit will be applied to specific subjects within the course being undertaken, which exempts the student from taking the subject to meet course requirements.

7.5 As specified credit recognises that the student has achieved equivalent subject learning outcomes, it can be used to meet pre-requisites. Specified credit will be determined on a case-by-case basis or determined as part of an articulation agreement.

Unspecified Credit

7.6 Unspecified credit will only be granted towards elective components of a course.

7.7 Unspecified credit will be granted based on prior formal learning that is appropriate in regard to the AQF level, volume of learning and learning and assessment approaches, with content that is appropriate to meet an elective option and satisfy overall course learning outcomes.

7.8 As unspecified credit does not recognise that the student has achieved equivalent subject learning outcomes, it cannot be used to meet pre-requisites. Unspecified credit will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

8. Granting of Credit

8.1 Credit may be granted when:

- the prior study or experience is assessed as equivalent in content and level to the subject(s) for which credit is being sought
- the credit or recognition of prior learning granted is academically defensible and considers the student's ability to make satisfactory academic progress and to successfully complete the requirements of the remainder of the course
- it is consistent with the broad integrity and the intended learning outcomes of the course
- specific requirements of an award are fulfilled, including any conditions associated with the professional accreditation of the award
- the course approval process permits the granting of credit
- prior learning that has been completed within the last ten years. This period may vary depending on the nature of the learning and the relevant discipline, with variations made on a case-by-case basis based on current academic, professional, and industry requirements. Appropriate variations to this period will be determined by the Head of School.

8.2 Ikon will only grant credit against full subjects and will not grant credit for partial completion of a subject.

8.3 If a student transfers from one Ikon course to another, credit or recognition of prior learning approved for the original course will not automatically be transferred and students must reapply for credit for the new course.

9. Maximum Credit Limit

9.1 Normally, the credit granted to a student for an individual course will not exceed 50% of the total credit points of the course. Exceptions to this will be considered on an individual basis by the Dean, based on evidence provided by the student, and the principles and details within this policy.

9.2 Students wishing to graduate with two Ikon awards may be granted cross credits not exceeding 50% of the shorter course.

PROCEDURE

10. Application for Credit and RPL

10.1 Applications must be made using the *Application for Recognition of Prior Learning and Credit form*, which can be found in the [Policies and Procedures](#) section on the Ikon website and in the student policy library, with supporting evidence.

10.2 Evidence of prior learning may be from:

- a recognised higher education provider

- a TAFE or other registered training organisation providing Vocational Education Training (VET)
 - a professional body or other similar body
 - work experience or other forms of practical experience, including voluntary work
- 10.3 Evidence submitted to support the application must be relevant, valid, sufficient, authentic, and current and will include original or certified copies of:
- all academic transcripts, qualification or testamur from a higher education provider or a registered training organisation (RTO) that was completed within the last 10 years
 - certificates from professional bodies, enterprises or other similar bodies that was completed within 10 years
 - current resume or CV (including up to two current referees with contact details to verify any professional experience)
 - subject outlines detailing learning outcomes, weekly structure, topic list, assessment details
 - completed and marked assessments in the field of study.
 - other evidence as outlined in the *Application for Recognition of Prior Learning and Credit* form.
- 10.4 Applications for credit should be lodged at any time prior to enrolment. Once a student has enrolled in the course, applications for credit will incur a significant fee, details of which can be found on the [Fees](#) page of the Ikon website.
- 10.5 Completed applications accepted by the student will be retained on the student's file.

11. Assessment of Applications for Credit and RPL

- 11.1 All applications for credit will be assessed by the relevant Head of School and the result notified to the student to occur within 10 days of receipt of a complete application.
- 11.2 Credit will be granted on the basis of equivalence which is determined by evaluating the extent to which there is equivalence between the completed components of a qualification and Ikon's course applied for in terms of:
- learning outcomes
 - content
 - learning and assessment processes
 - volume of learning
 - level of the qualification.
- 11.3 The determination of credit to be granted to the student requires academic judgement and the person assessing the level of credit should determine that there is at least 80% equivalence where credit is to be granted.

12. Articulation Agreements with Other Higher Education Providers

- 12.1 Where Ikon enters into an articulation agreement with another education provider for credit for students towards higher level AQF qualifications in the same or related discipline, having considered comparability and equivalence, the following provision in the AQF Qualifications Pathways Policy will be used as the basis of negotiations:

- 50% credit for an Advanced Diploma or Associate Degree linked to a 3-year Bachelor Degree
 - 37.5% credit for an Advanced Diploma or Associate Degree linked to a 4-year Bachelor Degree
 - 33% credit for a Diploma linked to a 3-year Bachelor Degree
 - 25% credit for a Diploma linked to a 4-year Bachelor Degree.
- 12.2 Such agreements do not preclude any further institutional or individual student negotiations for additional credit.

13. International Students

- 13.1 International students should be aware that the award of credit may affect their student visa entitlements.
- 13.2 If an international student is granted exemption into a course, which leads to a shortening of their course before the student's visa is granted, Ikon will indicate the actual net course duration (as reduced by course credit) in the confirmation of enrolment.
- 13.3 If an international student is granted exemption into a course which leads to a shortening of their course after the student's visa is granted, Ikon will report the change of course duration via PRISMS in accordance with section 19 of the Education Services of Overseas Students (ESOS) Act 2000.
- 13.4 Where the award of credit shortens the required duration of study for the course, Ikon is required to adjust the international student's course completion date in PRISMS. This may affect the international student's visa entitlements.

14. Credit Register

- 14.1 Ikon will maintain a register of credit decisions to facilitate transparency and equity across students and courses. The *Credit Register* will document decisions noted in credit agreements and those made on an individual basis.

15. Appeal

- 15.1 A student or prospective student who is dissatisfied with a decision regarding an application for recognition of prior learning or credit may lodge an *Application for Appeal* in accordance with Ikon's *Grievance and Appeals Policy*, both of which can be found in the [Policies and Procedures](#) section on the Ikon website.

16. Publication

- 16.1 This policy will be published in the [Policy and Procedures](#) section of the Ikon website, and the student and staff policy libraries.

Policy Information & History

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Government Legislation	Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011 Higher Education Support Act 2003 Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 National Code 2018 Australian Qualifications Framework
Responsible Officer	Dean
Sources:	In developing this policy, the following documents were considered: Australian Qualifications Framework Council, AQF Qualifications Pathways Policy , January 2013. Australian Qualifications Framework Council, Credit Transfer: An Explanation , November 2012 Australian Qualifications Framework Council, Recognition of Prior Learning: An Explanation , November 2012 TEQSA, Guidance Note: Credit and Recognition of Prior Learning , Version 1.1, March 2019 TEQSA, Good Practice Note: Making higher education admissions transparent for prospective students , 5 July 2019
Benchmarking:	External referencing activities were conducted against comparable providers and best practice using publicly available information, including Avondale University, Cairnmillar Institute, Kaplan Business School, Australian College of Applied Professions, Excelsia College, Alphacrucis College, Asia Pacific International College, and Australian Institute of Business Intelligence.
Editorial Amendment	22 September 2022 To improve the clarity of language and correct minor typos Approved by: Quality Assurance Manager