
POLICY S5.5

CREDIT AND RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Context

The Australasian College of Health and Wellness (ACHW) values opportunities for students to build upon their prior learning, whether this learning was acquired through prior formal, non-formal and informal learning or gained through appropriate professional work experience, ensuring students do not have to repeat learning that has been successfully completed elsewhere.

1.2 Purpose

This policy provides the principles and responsibilities for managing credit and recognition of prior learning at ACHW, in order to maximise the credit that students can gain from their completed prior learning and enhance progression into and between qualifications.

1.3 Scope

This policy and its procedure apply to applicants seeking admission with advanced standing due to prior formal, informal, and non-formal learning, and to current students seeking credit or recognition of prior learning during their course enrolment. This policy and its procedure also apply to ACHW and third-party staff with responsibilities to assess, approve, and record applications for credit and recognition of prior learning.

1.4 Scope Exceptions

None.

2.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Students are responsible for reading and ensuring they understand this policy and its procedure.
2. ACHW and third-party staff are responsible for complying with the policy and procedure and supporting students to understand it.

3.0 POLICY

3.1 Principles

1. ACHW acknowledges the value of providing students with opportunities to build upon prior learning, whether this learning was acquired through prior formal, non-formal, and informal learning or gained through appropriate professional work experience.
2. Credit decisions will aim to ensure that students do not have to repeat learning that has been successfully completed elsewhere, whilst not disadvantaging a student in achieving the course-level learning outcomes.
3. In accordance with the principles of the *AQF Qualifications Pathways Policy* for making decisions about awarding credit, decisions at ACHW will:
 - a. maximise the credit that students can gain (up to 50% of a qualification).
 - b. enhance student progression into and between qualifications.
 - c. be evidence-based, equitable and transparent.
 - d. be applied consistently and fairly with decisions subject to appropriate appeal and review.
 - e. recognise learning regardless of how, when and where it was acquired provided that the learning is relevant and current and has a relationship to the learning outcomes of the qualification.
 - f. be academically defensible and take into account the student's ability to successfully meet the learning outcomes of the qualification.
 - g. be decided in a timely way so that student's study progress is not unnecessarily inhibited; and
 - h. be formally documented (including reasons for not providing credit where applicable).
4. ACHW will not recognise part or all of a student's prior learning where it is not deemed equivalent, or where credit transfer is prohibited by course rules.
5. ACHW maintains a Credit Register to ensure the same credit/RPL decision is made for identical credit applications.
6. All credit and RPL decisions are recorded on the student record.

3.2 Types of Credit

1. Specified Credit

- a. Specified credit may be granted on the basis of prior formal learning that is deemed to be equivalent when considering the learning outcomes, volume of learning, program of study (including content) as well as learning and assessment approaches. *Note: in higher education, equivalence must be 80% or more, from an accredited higher education institution, and be gained within the last ten years.*
- b. When approved, specified credit will be transferred to specified units within a course, and recorded as Advanced Standing on the academic transcript, with the code AS. It recognises that the student has achieved equivalent unit(s) learning outcomes and can be used to meet pre-requisite requirements.

2. Block credit

- a. Block credit is granted when a student has completed a formal qualification set out as part of an approved pathway or formal articulation agreement. The amount of block credit granted is determined as part of the approved pathway or articulation agreement and will be automatically applied at the point of entry.
- b. Block credit exempts a student from completing multiple units - usually specified stages or components of a course - and is recorded as Advanced Standing, with the AS on the academic transcript. It does not recognise that the student has achieved equivalent unit(s) learning outcomes.
- c. Block credit for ACHW courses is shown in Schedule 1.

3. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

- a. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is a form of credit that results from an assessment of an individual's relevant prior informal and/or non-formal learning against a unit or course learning outcomes. Additional formal learning may also be taken into account when establishing RPL.
- b. When approved, RPL will be transferred against specified units within the course, and recorded as Advanced Standing on the academic transcript with the code AS. It recognises that the student has achieved equivalent unit(s) learning outcomes and can be used to meet pre-requisite requirements.

4. Summary of Credit Types

Credit Type	Specified Credit	Block Credit	RPL
Formal learning – qualification	✓	✓	✗
Formal learning - units	✓	✗	✗
Informal learning and/or non-formal learning	✗	✗	✓

3.3 Transferring Credit between Courses

1. If a student has credit approved whilst enrolled in one course and then transfers to a different course, the credit will not be automatically transferred. The student will need to re-apply to have the credit recognised.

3.4 Credit Limits

1. Students enrolled in ACHW higher education courses must undertake a minimum volume of learning within the course in order to qualify from that course with an ACHW award - i.e., they must complete no less than 50% of the qualification.
2. Maximum credit for ACHW's courses is shown in Schedule 1.
3. Credit and RPL cannot be given for part of a unit, or for an assessment item.

3.5 Exceeding Credit Limits

1. The Head of School, ACHW may approve credit beyond the limits shown in this policy, providing there is academic rationale consistent with the policy's principles. This includes instances where an institution discontinues a course and ACHW agrees to teach those students to completion.
2. Where the Head of School, ACHW approves credit beyond the limits stated in this policy, this must be reported to the Academic Board with a rationale for the decision.
3. The Credit Limits as set out in clause 3.4.1 of this Policy do not apply to approved ACHW nested awards.

3.6 Rescission of credit and RPL

1. Credit/RPL may be rescinded at the request of the student, after admission to the course.

2. Credit/RPL may be rescinded by ACHW in the following circumstances:
 - a. As part of a strategy to improve the progression outcomes for a student.
 - b. The qualification documentation provided by the student for assessment of credit/RPL is found to be fraudulent.

3.7 Appealing Credit/RPL Decisions

1. Students have the right to appeal against any decision made under this policy and its procedure.
2. The Student Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure must be followed for any appeal against a credit/RPL decision.

4.0 DEFINITIONS

- **Credit** - The value assigned to equivalence in content and learning outcomes between different types of learning and/or qualifications. Credit granted provides students with advanced standing in their course (i.e., it reduces the amount of learning required to achieve a qualification).
- **Credit Register** - a central register of credit decisions.
- **Credit Transfer** - a process which provides students with a consistent value of equivalence for learning outcomes in specified units.
- **Exit award** - an approved, lesser award that a student can choose to graduate with, that forms a complete sub-set of an approved, higher award in which the student was originally enrolled.
- **Formal Learning** - Learning that takes place through a structured training program that leads to the full or partial achievement of an accredited qualification.
- **Informal Learning** - Learning gained through professional work, social, family, hobby or leisure activities and experiences, without being organised or structured into objectives or time constraints.
- **Non-formal learning** - Learning that takes place through a structured program of learning that does not lead to an officially accredited qualification, for example short courses.
- **Pathways** - A formal way for students to move through qualification levels with full or partial recognition for the learning outcomes from the qualification they have already achieved.

- **Precedent Credit Decisions** - the application of the same credit decision to identical scenarios in subsequent credit decisions. Precedent credit decisions are recorded on the credit register.
- **Specified Credit** - Credit granted on the basis of formal learning to a specific component of a qualification.
- **Types of Credit** - see clause 3.2 of this policy.

5.0 REFERENCES AND ASSOCIATED INFORMATION

- Application for RPL and Credit form
- Application to Rescind Credit form
- [AQF Qualifications Pathways Policy](#)
- Credit and Recognition of Prior Learning Procedure
- Student Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure
- Schedule 1 to this policy - ACHW Maximum Credit and Block Credit

6.0 POLICY OWNERSHIP

Policy Owner	Chief Education Officer Higher Education
Status	Reviewed on September 2025
Approval Authority	ACHW Corporate Board
Date of Approval	11/09/2025
Effective Date	15/09/2025
Implementation Owner	Head of School, ACHW
Maintenance Owner	Senior Compliance Manager Higher Education
Review Due	December 2027

7.0 AMENDMENTS

Version	Amendment Approval (Date)	Amendment Made By (Position)	Amendment Details
S5.0	10 July 2017	Head of Compliance / Director ACHW	Initial document review after purchase of MHMHE
S5.1	10 March 2020	Academic Board	General review

Version	Amendment Approval (Date)	Amendment Made By (Position)	Amendment Details
S5.2	27 July 2021	Academic Board	Policy and Procedure separated. Rescission of credit/RPL added. Additional definitions. Appendix 1 changed to Schedule 1.
S5.3	25 June 2024	Executive Director	Reference when maximum credit may be granted for nested courses.
S5.4	13 January 2025	Executive Director	Changes to staffing
S5.5	11 September 2025	Senior Compliance Manager Higher Education	Minor administrative changes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update to staff titles • Template slightly revised following benchmarking

SCHEDULE 1: MAXIMUM CREDIT AND BLOCK CREDIT FOR ACHW COURSES

Purpose

This Schedule supports the Credit and RPL Policy and provides the credit arrangements for the following ACHW courses.

COURSE OF STUDY	ACHW SUBJECTS RECEIVING CREDIT			CREDIT ARRANGEMENTS
SHB50115 Diploma of Beauty Therapy	Subject Code	Subject Title	Credit Points	Graduates of the Diploma of Beauty Therapy receive recognition into the following ACHW courses: 1. Associate Degree in Applied Health Science (Dermal Therapy) 20 credit points (2 subjects) credited towards the 160 credit points of the Associate Degree. 2. Bachelor of Applied Health Science (Clinical aesthetics) 20 credit points (2 subjects) credited towards the 240 credit points of the bachelor's degree.
	AHS101	Integumentary System	10	
	CAP101	Introduction to Clinical Practice	10	
Bachelor of Nursing	Subject Code	Subject Title	Credit Points	Graduates of the Bachelor of Nursing receive recognition into the following ACHW courses: 1. Associate Degree in Applied Health Science (Dermal Therapy) 70 credit points (7 subjects) credited towards the 160 credit points of the Associate Degree. 2. Bachelor of Applied Health Science (Clinical aesthetics) 70 credit points (7 subjects) credited towards the 240 credit points of the bachelor's degree.
	AHS102	Introduction to Applied Health Science	10	
	HBS101	Human Structure and Function 1	10	
	HBS102	Human Structure and Function 2	10	
	HBS202	Patho- Physiology	10	
	HCM101	Introduction to Professional Practice	10	
	HCM102	Professional Communication	10	
	HCM201	Critical Thinking and Research Skills	10	