

CREDIT TRANSFER AND RECOGNISED PRIOR LEARNING

PRINCIPLES

- (i) In ACT courses, prior learning is recognised and/or credit is granted from previous non-ACT study in particular units. Block credit and advanced standing are not applied except in the case of the Bachelor of Christian Studies where block credit forms part of the requirements for the awarding of the degree.
- (ii) Transfer of credit between ACT courses will be based on merit grades.
- (iii) No more than 33% of an ACT award can be granted in credit from an accredited non-ACT award of at least the same level.
- (iv) No credit can be granted from units or an award completed at undergraduate level towards a masters degree or embedded graduate diploma.
- (v) A unit successfully completed or for which credit has been granted in an ACT award cannot be attempted in another award of the ACT. However, if it can be demonstrated that the subject matter of a project or seminar is different from that completed in another award, permission to enrol may be given.
- (vi) No unit already passed or for which credit has been granted in an ACT award can be repeated in that award for a merit grade.
- (vii) Units for which credit is granted from non-ACT awards are designated “AEG”, *ad eundem gradum* (credit transferred from an equivalent award or institution).
- (viii) Where credit is granted for from a non-ACT source towards one or more assessment pieces within a unit, those units are designated as “satisfactory”.
- (ix) There are no fees associated with RPL or credit transfer applications either imposed by the member colleges of the ACT or the ACT office.
- (x) The extent to which credit may be granted in an ACT award is dependent on the individual course rules.
- (xi) Applications must be submitted before the student enrolls in an ACT course, and will not normally be considered once the student has commenced study. The unit Supervised Experience-Based Learning (SEBL) is not eligible for RPL.
- (xii) Students who apply for credit based on non-ACT study towards an ACT award in which their enrolment was current at the time of the completion of the non-ACT study must have first received permission from their enrolling ACT member college and the Dean of the ACT for the credit application is to be considered based on such study.

CREDIT TRANSFER

Applications for credit transfer from incomplete non-ACT awards will not be considered if the units were completed more than ten years previously.

University students granted approval to count ACT units in their university degrees may enrol at ACT approved colleges and take up to 32 credit points of ACT units. If the approved credit must be at advanced level, such students may take ACT foundational level units at advanced level as long as approval has been given by the Dean on application from the approved college.

Exemptions for units may be granted in cases where there is no direct correlation between units studied and those for which the student is seeking credit, but where it is felt that the student would not benefit from repeating material similar in nature to that already completed elsewhere. The granting of exemptions does not reduce a student’s credit load for an award.

RECOGNISED PRIOR LEARNING

Applications for credit based on recognition of prior learning will be considered in accordance with the guidelines published in “National Principles and Operational Guidelines for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)” (AQF, 2004).

Definition

RPL is an alternative pathway to an AQF qualification that is different to credit transfer. RPL is related to learning achieved outside the formal education and training system.

How RPL is assessed

The key distinguishing characteristic is that it is the student who is assessed for RPL, as opposed to the previous course or unit(s) of study in the case of credit transfer.

In order to recognise prior learning it is necessary to compare the informal or non-formal learning the individual has achieved against the learning outcomes or performance criteria of the course or qualification to which the student is seeking entry; and to determine if the prior learning fulfils some or any of them.

The processes used to assess RPL applications may take several forms, for example:

- Participation in exactly the same or modified versions of the assessment the student would be required to complete as part of the full course;
- Assessment based on a portfolio of evidence;
- Direct observation of demonstration of skill or competence;
- Reflective papers, journals or portfolios that relate past learning to the learning or competency outcomes of the current course or qualification;
- Provision of examples of the student’s work drawn from the workplace, social, community or other setting in which the student applied their learning, skill or competence;
- Testimonials of learning, skill or competence;
- Combinations of any of the above.

The assessment of prior learning for recognition in an award should consider prior learning regardless of how, when and where it was acquired, provided that the learning is relevant to the learning or competency outcomes in a subject, unit, module, course or qualification.

APPLICATIONS FOR GRANTING OF CREDIT OR RPL

Any student wishing to apply for assessment for the granting of credit or RPL should prepare a Prior Learning Portfolio (PLP), which details his/her previous work experience, education and training details, and other interests and skills. Supporting documentation, such as references, course details about previous credentialed learning, reports, should be included with the application. Applicants may wish to identify ACT units against which the credit may be granted.

In the case where credit is sought based on RPL, the application should outline the link between the student’s learning experiences and the learning outcomes of the unit(s) in which the student is seeking credit.

Students may be required to undertake some form of test or assessment to demonstrate that they have achieved the learning outcomes stated.

Overseas applicants for admission to an ACT course, who wish to be considered for credit transfer/RPL, should lodge their PLP when they lodge their application for admission to a member college.

Prior Learning Portfolios

In the case of credentialed learning, the PLP should contain:

- Certified copies of statement(s) of satisfactory completion of a course or units in a course offered by a professional body or enterprise, private educational institution, or by any other provider recognised by a university;
- Documentation stating the objectives, learning outcomes and content of the units in the course;
- For each unit successfully completed, details of any formal assessment of learning undertaken and, if relevant, grades obtained;
- Details of the contact hours of the units in a course

In the case of uncredentialed learning, applications should include:

- Details of prior learning experience(s) to support the claim for credit in units of the proposed ACT courses;
- A detailed curriculum vitae;
- Letters of support from appropriate persons/organisations who can verify these details.

Recording of decisions to grant credit:

Students who are granted credit will be informed in writing of the approval, and a copy of the letter is given to their enrolled college for placement in their file. The amount of credit given is also recorded on the student's electronic record in the system database.

With regard to overseas students, if credit granted shortens the student's course, this must be reflected in the offer letter (as this is the contract with the student) and will be indicated either on the eCoE issued for that student to commence the course, or reported on PRISMS. Such students are reminded that they must still maintain a full time study load and that RPL can affect their visa status.

SPECIFIC AWARD DETAILS

Diploma of Theology/Diploma of Ministry:

- (i) For Diploma candidates a maximum of 32 cps can be granted as credit from other accredited academic programs of the ACT. The further eight units needed to complete the Diploma may not include any units equivalent to units taken in the other program.
- (ii) ACT degree units may be credited to the diplomas as long as a grade of 40% or more has been achieved. Those transferring in total from the degrees to the diploma may be granted permission to take out the Diploma at other than pass level at the discretion of the Dean.
- (iii) For a completed pass certificate at Level IV or higher (for example, the Associate in Theology), 8 cps of undesignated credit may be given in elective units.

Advanced Diploma of Theology/Advanced Diploma of Ministry

- (i) A maximum of 64 cps may be credited from other completed accredited academic programs of the ACT. The further eight credits needed to complete the Advanced Diploma may not include any units equivalent to units taken in the other program.
- (ii) ACT degree units may be credited to the diplomas as long as a grade of 40% or more has been achieved. Those transferring from degree study to a diploma award may be granted permission to take out the Advanced Diploma at other than pass level at the discretion of the Dean.
- (iii) For a completed pass certificate at Level IV or higher (for example, the Associate in Theology), 8 cps of undesignated credit may be given in elective units.

Associate Degree

- (i) No more than 8 cps may be granted to ACT undergraduate degrees from a complete or incomplete ACT or non-ACT one year Certificate IV in theology or ministry.
- (ii) In the case of a two year non-ACT VET diploma in ministry or theology, 16 cps may be granted.
- (iii) No more than 32 cps credit can be granted from completion of the ACT's three-year Advanced Diploma of Theology or Advanced Diploma of Ministry.
- (iv) No more than 24 cps credit can be granted from completion of the ACT's two-year Diploma of Theology or Diploma of Ministry
- (v) Students who are enrolled in an ACT diploma award may wish to obtain academic credit towards the AssocDegTheol in one or more of the following ways:
 - There are some units that have the same syllabi in the diplomas and the undergraduate degrees. Most of these are located in the Department of Ministry and Practice and are skills based. One or more of these units in a diploma or an advanced diploma (up to a maximum of 25% of the diploma award) may be counted for academic credit in the relevant degree. The full list can be found in the appendix to this document.
 - Students with an incomplete diploma award may obtain academic credit in a degree at the rate of two degree units for every three diploma units which are completed with a Credit result or better. The exact units for which credit is received will be determined on a case by case basis.
 - Unless counted in the above provision, students who obtain at least a credit grade in any of the six core foundational units in Old Testament, New Testament, and Church History (all at 200 level) gain academic credit to the corresponding undergraduate degree unit at 300 level.
- (vi) The ACT's policy has been not to grant credit of more than 33% of an award from a completed non-ACT award considered of equivalent standard. Credit of this order may be granted from an incomplete award

Bachelor of Christian Studies

- (i) No more than 8 cps may be granted to ACT undergraduate degrees from a complete or incomplete ACT or non-ACT one year Certificate IV in theology or ministry.
- (ii) In the case of a two year non-ACT VET diploma in ministry or theology, 16 cps may be granted.
- (iii) As a condition of graduating with the degree, credit of 32 cps will be granted applicants who have satisfactorily completed at least one year full-time in a degree level course of study in a non-theological discipline at an Australian university (or at a non self-accrediting institution considered equivalent). Authorised transcripts must be submitted to an approved college with the enrolment form.
- (iv) No more than 32 cps credit will be granted three-year Advanced Diploma students or graduates who are eligible for ACT undergraduate degree credit.

- (v) No more than 24 cps credit will be granted two-year Diploma students or graduates who are eligible for ACT undergraduate degree credit.

Bachelor of Ministry/Bachelor of Theology

- (i) No more than 8 cps may be granted to ACT undergraduate degrees from a complete or incomplete ACT or non-ACT one year Certificate IV in theology or ministry.
- (ii) In the case of a two year non-ACT VET diploma in ministry or theology, 16 cps may be granted.
- (iii) BCS students may be granted up to 64 cps of credit to the BMin/BTh provided that the BCS is surrendered. In the case where a student has completed extra units in the degree pool these also may be credited in addition to the normal 64 credit points.
- (iv) Unless students have successfully completed Greek (LA202, 204) and Hebrew (LA201, 203) for which degree credit will be automatically granted, a maximum of 64 cps is available for ACT Advanced Diploma graduates and 44 cps for ACT Diploma graduates towards the BMin/BTh. Graduates must have achieved a GPA of 2.0 in their award for the above credit to apply. The exact units for which credit is received will be determined on a case by case basis.
- (v) Graduates of the ACT's Advanced Diploma with a GPA of 1.75 – 2.0 may be granted credit for OT301 and OT302, NT301 and NT302, and CH301 and CH302.
- (vi) Students who are enrolled in an ACT diploma award may wish to obtain academic credit towards the BMin/BTh in one or more of the following ways:
- There are some units that have the same syllabi in the diplomas and the undergraduate degrees. Most of these are located in the Department of Ministry and Practice and are skills based. One or more of these units in a diploma or an advanced diploma (up to a maximum of 25% of the diploma award) may be counted for academic credit in the relevant degree. The full list can be found in the appendix to this document.
 - Students with an incomplete diploma award may obtain academic credit in a degree at the rate of two degree units for every three diploma units which are completed with a credit result or better. The exact units for which credit is received will be determined on a case by case basis.
 - Unless counted in the above provision, students who obtain at least a credit grade in any of the six core foundational units in Old Testament, New Testament, and Church History (all at 200 level) gain academic credit to the corresponding undergraduate degree unit at 300 level.

Bachelor of Theology/Bachelor of Ministry Honours

- (i) Normally advanced standing will not be given candidates in the Bachelors Honours programs. Nevertheless applications for RPL will be considered for the coursework phase.
- (ii) Students who already possess research qualifications at an equivalent level would be granted credit for Research Methods (RM495).

Master of Divinity

- (i) ACT Graduate Diploma of Bible and Ministry or Graduate Diploma of Christian Studies graduates could receive up to 32 cps advanced standing in the MDiv. Students transferring to the MDiv would need to surrender their diploma.
- (ii) No credit could be claimed for units completed at certificate or (advanced) diploma level.

Master of Arts in Christian Studies

- (i) Students who have already developed a basis in theological reflection, biblical interpretation, and exegetical knowledge and skills, may receive advanced standing. This applies in particular to students who hold the Graduate Diploma in Christian Studies.
- (ii) Students who hold the ACT's Graduate Diploma in Christian Studies will be admitted to the degree with 50% advanced standing provided that the completed program includes units that are equivalent to the prescribed core units of the MACS.
- (iii) Students who hold either the ACT's BTh, BMin or MDiv degrees—or an approved equivalent theological degree awarded by a recognised and reputable provider—and a Graduate Diploma in a non-theological field may be granted admission to the degree, and may be granted advanced standing of up to 50% of the degree.

Master of Arts (Theology)/Master of Arts (Ministry)

- (i) Students with a completed ACT Honours degree may be granted up to 24 cps in the Master of Arts (Ministry)/ Master of Arts (Theology). No credit will be given for the coursework masters project (**790).
- (ii) Students with a completed ACT MDiv degree will be given advanced standing for up to two 700 level units in the MA from successfully completed 700 level units in their MDiv program.

Doctor of Ministry

- (i) Students with a completed ACT MTh degree or the Honours Degree of Bachelor of Ministry or Theology with Honours Class 1 or have completed the MA (Theol) or MA (Min) with a GPA of 2.0 and credit grade in the 16 cp project, or its equivalent at a recognised non ACT institution, are exempt from the essay requirement, but must supply the required reading logs and fulfil all other entry requirements.
- (ii) A prospective student without an ACT award would be required to demonstrate that his/her prior learning amounted to the equivalent of a three-year ACT degree.
- (iii) No more than 33% of an ACT award can be granted in credit from an accredited non-ACT award of the same length. Normally, no credit can be granted from an unaccredited unit or units unless it can be shown that the skills achieved in the prior study are equivalent to skills acquired in an ACT unit of study. Where the non-ACT award is considered equivalent in standard but where the minimum time of candidature is less than the ACT award for which credit is sought, then the maximum credit allowed will be the number of credit points equivalent to 33% of the non-ACT award.
- (iv) Exemptions may be granted in cases where a student has completed at the same level a substantial amount of the unit of study offered by the ACT.

DEFINITIONS

“Credentialed Learning” – relevant skills, knowledge or competencies that have been acquired from a provider other than the ACT (or other accredited Higher Education Provider). For example, education or training provided through employer-based programs, professional bodies, TAFE colleges.

“Credit Transfer” – the recognition for credit of prior study

“Exemption” – where a student is not required to take a certain unit(s) on the basis of work already completed but is required to undertake an alternative unit of equivalent credit points.

“Merit grade” – a grade awarded based on student performance in the assessment of a unit

“RPL” – Recognised Prior Learning

“PLP” – Prior Learning Portfolio

“Specified Credit” – credit granted in the form of specific unit(s) from which a student is exempted.

“TAFE” – Technical and Further Education

“Uncredentialed Learning” – Learning acquired through work and life experience

“Unspecified Credit” – see credit which is given in one course on the basis of prior formal studies in another course without the direct correlation of learning outcomes.

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ref: policies/rpl