CREDIT FOR PRIOR LEARNING POLICY AND PROCEDURE

1. Overview

Granting credit for prior learning ensures that students, domestic and international, commence study at a level that appropriately recognises their prior learning experiences and are not required to repeat equivalent learning successfully undertaken in another context.

Skyline Higher Education Australia (SHEA) is committed to developing open and accessible guidelines to grant credit towards a course of study based on prior learning, whether from formal studies or professional work experience.

This policy is designed to both maximise the credit all students can gain for learning already undertaken and preserve the integrity of learning outcomes or discipline requirements of the award to which it applies.

This policy incorporates the best practice principles outlined in the *AQF Qualifications Pathways Policy*[1].

SHEA's policy on the granting of credit will:

i. be evidence-based, clear, equitable, accessible and transparent;
ii. be applied consistently and fairly with decisions subject to review;
iii. recognise prior learning regardless of how, when and where it was acquired, provided that the prior learning is relevant and current and has a relationship to the learning outcomes of the course;
iv. be academically defensible and account for the students' chance of success in a course and that a student will not be disadvantaged in achieving a course's expected learning outcomes;
v. ensure the integrity of the course of study and resulting qualification are maintained;
vi. be decided in a timely way;
vii. ensure that pathways into and between awards are available to all students by furthering articulation pathways with other higher education and vocational training providers and facilitating transfer between courses at SHEA;
viii. be formally documented for the student including any reasons for not granting credit.

2. Granting of credit

2.1 General principles

i. Entry to SHEA's courses is based on specific published entry criteria and decisions regarding student selection will be in accordance with the *POL026 Student Admissions Policy and Procedure*
ii. An offer of credit does not guarantee admission into a specific course.
iii. The assessment of the amount of credit to be granted in specific courses shall be determined by the Course Coordinator within the framework of this policy and must be reviewed by the Learning and Teaching Committee.
iv. Regardless of the credit granted, the requirements of each course must be fulfilled.
v. Credit can be given in the form of block, specified or unspecified credit.
vi. Candidates for an award from SHEA are required to complete a minimum amount of the course through SHEA. The total credit granted for prior learning external to SHEA shall not normally exceed 50% of the total credit points required for the award toward which

[1] Australian Qualifications Framework Handbook – January 2013

credit is sought, except as approved by the Academic Board. The 50% may comprise a mixture of credit for formal study and credit for work experience. However, no more than 20% credit will be granted for learning from relevant and documented work experience.

vii. Credit granted for a specific course cannot automatically be transferred from one course to another.

2.2 Credit for formal studies

i. Credit will not normally be granted for formal study completed more than five years prior to the application unless there is evidence of continued relevance of this study for the course towards which credit is sought.

ii. Credit may be granted for the successful completion of:
   a. subjects that form part of an accredited course provided by a recognised higher education provider;
   b. non-award courses offered by a recognised higher education provider;
   c. accredited courses at AQF Level 5 and above offered by a registered vocational training provider;
   d. professional development or professional recognition courses provided by a professional association or other similar body;
   e. training delivered by employers or other similar training.

iii. Credit shall be granted where there is substantial overlap with content and/or learning outcomes of SHEA's subjects for which credit is claimed.

iv. When assessing credit for formal studies the following will be accounted for:
   a. The student's overall prior academic record;
   b. the general educational practices and standards of the provider(s) or any accreditation obtained by such provider that may be relevant to the course under consideration;
   c. the objectives of the specific course and the methods adopted to achieve those objectives;
   d. admission requirements to the course;
   e. the duration of the course, having regard to entry requirements and course objectives;
   f. the breadth, depth and balance in the course material involved and the intellectual effort required;
   g. the methods of assessment;
   h. the relative emphasis on the teaching of skills in relation to the study of the discipline;
   i. any arrangements for practical training and experience as part of the course.

2.3 Credit for learning from work experience

i. Credit may be granted for work experience where that learning can be documented to the satisfaction of the Course Coordinator. The onus shall be on the applicant to provide appropriate evidence or demonstrate the relevant skills, knowledge and understanding.

ii. The maximum credit that can be granted for learning from work experience is 20% of the total credit points required for the course toward which credit is sought.

iii. When assessing credit for work experience, the following will be accounted for:

a. Authenticity - the applicant has demonstrated the learning outcomes that are being claimed;
b. Currency - the learning outcomes are still valid and performable;
c. Quality - the learning has reached the acceptable level;
d. Relevance - the learning is applicable to the subject claimed;
e. Transferability - the learning outcome can be applied outside the specific context in which it was learned;
f. Comparability - the prior learning is comparable in content and standard with the subject in which credit is sought.

2.4 Internal transfer between courses

i. Credit may be granted when a student has completed subjects while undertaking a course with SHEA and wishes to transfer to another course within SHEA.

ii. Credit will be granted for those subjects already undertaken that form part of the course into which the student is transferring.

iii. The maximum credit that can be granted in these circumstances is not limited.

3. Applications

An application for credit based on prior learning must be made on the appropriate form, preferably at the time of application for admission to a course. Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit applications for credit for prior learning prior to the commencement of their course to ensure timely determination and appropriate enrolment planning. The application should be accompanied by sufficient documentary evidence to support the application.

Assessment of the application will be undertaken by the Course Coordinator at no cost to the student, who will advise the applicant in writing of the result of their application within ten working days. Where an application is submitted close to the commencement of a study period, SHEA will ensure that students are not disadvantaged while the application is being assessed. This may include provisional participation in the subject and appropriate enrolment adjustments once the outcome of the application is finalised. Students will be given an opportunity to accept the offer of credit in writing. Students may elect to decline an offer of credit for prior learning. Where a student declines credit, the decision must be formally recorded and may be subject to approval by the Course Coordinator to ensure alignment with course structure, academic progression requirements, and, where applicable, visa and enrolment conditions. A record of any credit granted (including any reasons for not giving credit) and its acceptance will be maintained on the student's file for a period of two years after the student ceases to be an accepted student.

To support consistency, transparency, and quality assurance in decision-making, SHEA maintains an internal register of precedent decisions for credit for prior learning applications. This register records key details of previous determinations and is used to inform decision-making in comparable cases, while allowing for appropriate case-by-case academic judgement.

It is the intention of this policy that students should be advised of the credit that is offered at the time they accept a place in a course.

A fee will apply (as shown on the SHEA website) for international students that lodge an application for credit for prior learning after their CoE has been issued. No fee will apply for applications for credit for prior learning received from an international student at the same time as their application for admission.

An application for credit for a particular subject will not be accepted after a student has already commenced that subject.

All decisions of the Course Coordinator in relation to the granting of credit will be subject to oversight by the Learning and Teaching Committee to ensure consistency, academic integrity, and alignment with course learning outcomes.

4. International students applying for credit

If the applicant is an international student applying for a study visa the following applies:

a) Where credit is granted before the issue of a visa, the actual course duration in the CoE issued to the student will be reduced.

b) Where credit is granted after the issue of a visa, SHEA will report the change of course duration via PRISMS.

If an international student is granted credit that shortens their course, it remains a visa condition that they continue to study full-time.

International students will be provided with a written record of the decision to enable the student to accept the offer of credit once their visa has been granted and will be informed of the reduced course duration following granting of credit. The CoE will be issued only for the reduced duration of the course. The written record of acceptance will be retained for at least two years after the international student ceases to be an accepted student.

5. Articulation arrangements (credit agreements)[2]

In line with national policy, and where appropriate, SHEA will systematically negotiate agreements with other tertiary education providers to maximise the credit available to eligible students for entry into SHEA's courses, where appropriate. These agreements will provide graduates of specific courses offered by recognised providers of tertiary education credit for subjects that form part of a SHEA course.

When negotiating such agreements, SHEA will consider the comparability and equivalence of the articulating institution's course, notably:

a) the learning outcomes;

b) the volume of learning;

c) the content; and

d) learning and assessment approaches.

To assess the quantum of credit which may be awarded, SHEA will map the specified learning outcomes for the course provided by the external institution against the learning outcomes of subjects within the relevant SHEA course. Credit for a subject within SHEA's course will only be granted where there is a substantial match against the learning outcomes of that subject.

The benchmarks for the quantum of credit normally granted to students towards higher level AQF qualifications in the same or related discipline are as follows:

Bachelor Degree

a) 50% credit for an Advanced Diploma or Associate Degree linked to a 3-year bachelor Degree within the same discipline.

b) 37.5% credit for an Advanced Diploma or Associate Degree linked to a 4-year bachelor Degree.

[2] Articulation arrangements may also be referred to as 'credit transfer arrangements' or 'pathways'.

c) 33% credit for a Diploma linked to a 3-year bachelor degree.

d) 25% credit for a Diploma linked to a 4-year bachelor degree.

Master degree

a) 25% credit from a cognate bachelor degree to a 2 year AQF 9 degree.

The existence of a credit agreement does not preclude an individual student from applying for additional credit under this policy.

The Academic Board will approve all articulation schedules after evidence of the mapping of the learning outcomes of the external course against SHEA's course underpinning the proposed credit arrangements has been considered.

Once the articulation schedule has been approved by the Academic Board, individual Articulation Agreements can be entered into with providers, as approved by the CEO. All completed Articulation Agreements will be recorded in a register of articulation agreements.

SHEA will make publicly available relevant details of all current credit agreements in accordance with section 2.3 of the *AQF Qualifications Pathways Policy*[3].

5.1 Internal articulation arrangements

SHEA may develop internal articulation arrangements to enable graduates of lower AQF level courses offered by SHEA to articulate to higher AQF level courses offered by SHEA, where appropriate. The process for developing these arrangements and determining the quantum of credit will be the same for external articulation arrangements.

6. Review of a decision

A student may request a review of a decision on the granting of credit. The grounds for a review are that the decision is inconsistent with this policy. Requests for a review must be made in writing and lodged with the Dean within ten working days of the student receiving written notification of the decision. The Dean will respond to the request within ten working days and may confirm or vary the decision. All decisions of the Dean in relation to reviews under this policy will be reported to the Learning and Teaching Committee.

If a student remains dissatisfied with the outcome of their request for review of a decision regarding the granting of credit they may utilise SHEA's grievance handling procedures within ten working days of receiving notification of the outcome of the review.

7. Related documentation

- Credit for Prior Learning Application Form
- POL024 Student Grievance Handling Policy and Procedure
- POL026 Student Admissions Policy and Procedure
- Articulation Agreement template
- Articulation Schedules
- Register of CPL decisions

8. Publication and review

[3] As set out in the Australian Qualifications Framework Handbook – January 2013.

This policy will be made available to all prospective and existing students on SHEA's website to enable them to make well-informed choices between alternative pathways and account for the credit that may be available to them. Prospective students will be advised in pre-enrolment information about this policy.

This policy will be regularly reviewed to maximise applicability to new and updated awards and to student and industry needs in line with section 4.3 of SHEA's *Quality Assurance Framework*.

9. Version history

Version	Approved by	Approval Date	Details
1.0	Academic Board	19 October 2022	Document creation and initial approval
1.1	Dean	18 November 2022	Sections 2.2 and 5a updated to reflect five years of previous study (2.2) and 'within the same discipline' (5)
2.0	Academic Board	13 September 2023	Section 3 updated to include length of time for keeping a student record
2.1	Dean	14 February 2024	Section 3 updated to reduce the time from twenty days to ten days for notification to students of the result of their application for credit for prior learning
2.2	Dean	19 May 2024	Section 3: added that CPL is at no cost to the student Section 5: Credit for master degrees added
2.3	Dean	17 July 2024	Section 2: 2.1 and 2.3 Credit that can be granted for learning from work experience changed from 25% to 20% Additional criterion for assessing credit in 2.2 iv
2.4	Dean	10 April 2025	Section 3: clarification that a student must apply for credit before commencing a subject; advice that a fee applies to international students that apply for credit after their COE is issued Section 5: clarification of approval of articulation schedules
2.5	Academic Board	19 November 2025	Updating section 2.1 to better define minimum study requirements
2.6	Dean	28 April 2026	Updated wording in Section 3 to encourage early submission of CPL applications and include explicit provisions ensuring students are not disadvantaged where decisions are finalised after commencement. Included mention of the internal register for CPL. Updated the oversight of the LTC in CPL granted.
2.7	Dean	19 October 2026	Minor amendments arising from 2026 compliance mapping exercise against the National Code to align with Standard 2

Document owner: Dean