CREDIT FOR PRIOR LEARNING (ADVANCED STANDING) POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Sydney Institute of Traditional Chinese Medicine

1. Overview

Granting credit for prior learning ensures that students 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.

Sydney Institute of Traditional Chinese Medicine ("SITCM") is committed to develop open and accessible guidelines to grant credit towards a course of study on the basis of prior learning, whether from formal studies or professional work experience.

This policy is designed to both maximise the credit 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].

SITCM's policy on the granting of credit will:

- be evidence based, clear, equitable, accessible and transparent;
- be applied consistently and fairly with decisions subject to appeal and review;
- 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;
- be academically defensible and take into account the students' chance of success in a course;
- be decided in a timely way;
- 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 SITCM;
- be formally documented for the student including any reasons for not granting credit.

2. Granting of credit

2.1 General principles

i. Entry to SITCM's courses is based on specific published entry criteria and decisions regarding student selection will be in accordance with *Student Selection and 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 particular courses shall be determined by the Associate Deans within the framework of this policy. The summary of such assessment must be reviewed by the Teaching and Learning 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 SITCM are required to complete a minimum amount of the course through SITCM. The total credit granted for prior learning external to SITCM shall not exceed 50% of the total credit points required for the award toward which credit is sought. The 50% may comprise a mixture of credit for formal study and credit for work experience, however no more than 25% 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.

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[1] AQF Qualifications Framework 2013

2.2 Credit for formal studies

i. Credit will not normally be granted for formal study completed more than ten years prior to 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. units which form part of an accredited course provided by a recognised higher education institution;

   b. non-award courses offered by a recognised higher education institution;

   c. accredited courses with a vocational training provider;

   d. 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 SITCM unit for which credit is claimed.

iv. When assessing credit for formal studies the following will be taken into account:

   a. 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;

   b. the objectives of the particular course and the methods adopted to achieve those objectives;

   c. admission requirements to the course;

   d. the duration of the course, having regard to entry requirements and course objectives;

   e. the breadth, depth and balance in the course material involved and the intellectual effort required;

   f. the methods of assessment;

   g. the relative emphasis on the teaching of skills in relation to the study of the discipline;

   h. 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 Associate Deans. 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 25% 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 taken into account:

   a. Authenticity - the applicant has actually 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 unit 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 unit(s) in which credit is sought.

2.4 Internal transfer between courses

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

ii. Credit will be granted for those units already undertaken which 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 two weeks before the commencement of the semester in which the unit is delivered. The application should be accompanied by sufficient documentary evidence to support the application.

Assessment of the application will be undertaken by the Associate Deans who will advise the applicant in writing of the result of their application within 21 working days. A record of any credit granted (including any reasons for not giving credit) will be signed by the Associate Deans and the student and placed on the student's file.

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.

All decisions of the Associate Deans in relation to the granting of credit will be reviewed by the Teaching and Learning Committee.

4. International students

If the applicant is an international student applying for a study visa the following applies:
- Where credit is granted before the issue of a visa, the actual course duration in the eCoE issued to the student will be reduced.
- Where credit is granted after the issue of a visa, SITCM 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.

5. Articulation arrangements (credit agreements)[2]

In line with national policy SITCM will systematically negotiate agreements with other tertiary education providers to maximise the credit available to eligible students for entry into SITCM's courses. These agreements will provide graduates of specific courses offered by recognised providers of tertiary education credit for particular units which form part of an Institution course.

When negotiating these agreements SITCM will take into account the comparability and equivalence of the articulating institution's course, notably:
- the learning outcomes;
- the volume of learning;
- the content; and
- learning and assessment approaches.

In order to assess the quantum of credit which may be awarded, SITCM will map the specified learning outcomes for the course provided by the external institution against the learning outcomes of units within the relevant Institution course. Credit for a unit within SITCM course will only be granted where there is a substantial match against the learning outcomes of that unit.

The benchmarks for the quantum of guaranteed credit granted to students towards higher level AQF qualifications in the same or related discipline are as follows:
- 50% credit for an Advanced Diploma or Associate Degree linked to a 3 year Bachelor Degree.

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[2] For the purposes of Schedule 1A of the *Higher Education Support Act 2003* and the AQF Qualifications Framework 2011 articulation agreements are known as 'Credit Transfer Arrangements'. Articulation arrangements are also colloquially known as 'pathways'.

- 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.

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

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

Once approved by the Academic Board the articulation arrangement will be set out in a formal credit agreement, signed by both parties and recorded in a register of approved articulation agreements.

SITCM will make publicly available details of all current credit agreements in accordance with the *AQF Qualifications Register Policy*.

5.1 Internal articulation arrangements

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

6. Appeals

A student may appeal against a decision on the award of credit. The grounds for appeal are that the decision is inconsistent with this policy. Appeals must be made in writing and lodged with the Dean within five working days of the student receiving written notification of the decision. The Dean will respond to the appeal within fourteen working days and may confirm or vary the decision. All decisions of the Dean in relation to appeals will be reviewed by the Teaching and Learning Committee.

If a student remains dissatisfied with the outcome of their appeal against a decision regarding the award of credit they may utilise SITCM's grievance handling procedures.

7. Related documentation

- Credit for Prior Learning Application Form

8. Publication and review

This policy will be made available to all prospective and existing students on SITCM's website to enable them to make well-informed choices between alternative pathways and take into account the credit that may be available to them. Prospective students will be advised in pre-enrolment materials and upon enrolment 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 SITCM's *Quality Assurance Framework*.

9. Version control

Document: Credit for Prior Learning (Advanced Standing) Policy and Procedure		
Policy Owner: Academic Board		
Policy Developer/Reviewer: Dean	Version #: 2.0	Date: 4 May 2017

Version History

Version	Authorised by	Approval Date	Details
1.0	Academic Board	7 November 2011	Document creation
2.0	Academic Board	27 August 2014	Various sections: clarification in time frames
2.1	Dean	4 May 2017	Review for alignment with HESF 2015