

# Credit Policy

## Section 1 - Purpose

(1) This policy sets out the requirements for credit for prior learning towards Charles Sturt University (the University) courses.

(2) It is intended to achieve the following objectives:

- a. Students have pathways to study at the University from post-secondary education and accredited tertiary education institutions.
- b. The University contributes to open, accessible, inclusive and integrated post-compulsory education systems.
- c. The University facilitates students' mobility between institutions, sectors, states and countries.
- d. Students' previous formal and informal learning is recognised where it is current and relevant to the learning outcomes of a subject.
- e. Students are not required to repeat learning, but rather progress through a continuum of learning.
- f. Students can gain a qualification in the shortest time, provided that the quality, integrity and standing of the qualification are not diminished by the granted credit.
- g. Credit decisions are consistent, fair, evidence-based and the reasons for them are clear to students.
- h. There are review and appeal processes for credit decisions.
- i. Credit and information about credit are available to students, and are managed, in accordance with the requirements of:
  - i. the [Australian Qualifications Framework](#) and specifically its Qualifications Pathways Policy;
  - ii. the Universities Australia Provision of Education to International Students Code of Practice and Guidelines; and
  - iii. the [Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000](#) and the [National Code](#) under that Act.

### Scope

(3) This policy applies to prospective students, students, staff and decision-making bodies of the University, agents and partners of the University. This policy does not apply to students applying for or enrolled in non-award courses.

(4) Credit may not be available for some courses.

### References

(5) Where supporting documents are named in this policy, they will be listed in the associated information tab.

## Section 2 - Glossary

(6) For the purposes of this policy, the following terms have the stated meanings:

- a. Articulated set of courses: a sequence of courses in which the subjects required for the earlier course(s) in the sequence are a subset of the subjects required for the later course(s).

- b. Articulation – when completion of a lower-level course meets the entry requirements for a higher-level course or enables graduates of the lower-level course to enter the higher-level course with a standard grant of credit.
- c. Articulation agreement – a formal agreement between the University and another institution, for articulation between courses of the two institutions.
- d. Articulation arrangement – a decision to permit articulation by graduates of another institution’s course with a Charles Sturt University course, without a formal agreement between the two institutions.
- e. Course director – includes both the role titled ‘course director’ and the role titled ‘course coordinator’ where that title is still used.
- f. Coursework course – a course leading to a qualification at an Australian Qualifications Framework level of 8 or below, or a masters course with no research component or with a research component weighted at less than 66% of the total credit points required to complete the course. Coursework courses lead to an award of an undergraduate certificate, undergraduate diploma, associate degree, bachelor degree, bachelor (honours) degree, graduate certificate, graduate diploma, or a master by coursework as defined in the previous sentence.
- g. Coursework subject – a subject on a specified topic for which students engage with texts, learning materials and/or resources, and complete assessment tasks; not a research component subject.
- h. Credit – recognition of a student’s prior learning as equivalent to and standing in place of subjects of components of a course. Credit reduces the amount of learning required to achieve a qualification. Credit can be recorded as:
  - i. Block credit – credit granted for whole stages or components of a course, often granted as a number of subject points. Block credit may be specified or unspecified credit.
  - ii. Specified credit – credit granted for a specific subject or subjects.
  - iii. Ungraded credit – credit granted as a transfer credit (TCR) or proficiency credit (PCR) to show that credit has been given, rather than an achievement grade.
  - iv. Unspecified credit – credit that is not for specific subjects, but rather for a number of subject points, to fulfil course requirements.
- i. Credit agreement – a formal agreement between the University and another institution, to grant a standard amount of credit transfer for components of the other institution’s course, towards a Charles Sturt University course.
- j. Credit arrangement – a decision to grant a standard amount of block credit transfer for components of another institution’s course, towards a Charles Sturt University course, without a formal agreement between the two institutions.
- k. Credit precedent – a credit decision, in which credit has been granted for a subject from another institution, and this decision has been used to establish a rule for assessing subsequent applications for the same course and subject.
- l. Formal learning – learning that involves completing credit-bearing subjects at an accredited tertiary education institution.
- m. Forward credit – credit granted in advance, provisionally, for a subject in which the student is permitted to enrol in a different course, on the condition that the student passes the subject.
- n. Graded credit - transfer credit for subjects completed at Charles Sturt University which includes the student's original grade for the source subject.
- o. Higher degree by research course – a course leading to a qualification at Australian Qualifications Framework level 9 or level 10 in which a research component makes up 66% or more of the course volume of learning. Higher degree by research courses lead to the award of a master by research, professional doctorate or doctor of philosophy.
- p. Informal learning – learning gained outside of formal or non-formal learning, for example through work or leisure activities (e.g. charity or community group participation).
- q. Integrated bachelor (honours) course – where a bachelor degree and a one-year bachelor (honours) degree are

combined in an integrated bachelor (honours) course that meets the requirements of both courses.

- r. Non-formal learning – learning through education or training that does not involve completing credit-bearing subjects at an accredited tertiary education institution, such as professional development or workplace training.
- s. Proficiency credit – credit granted based on a student’s previous non-formal or informal learning.
- t. Prospective student – an individual who is considering attending the University but has not yet applied.
- u. Recognition of prior learning (RPL) - the process of assessing a student’s prior learning (formal, informal and non-formal) to decide whether it is sufficient for credit.
- v. Research component – one or more subjects in which students undertake a substantial piece of research and produce a thesis, dissertation, portfolio or project.
- w. Source subject or course – the subject or course that is the basis for credit.
- x. Standard credit pathway - an application for credit not including an articulation or credit arrangement or agreement.
- y. Student – a person who is enrolled in a course or subject at the University.
- z. Subject coordinator – includes both the role titled ‘subject coordinator’ and the role titled ‘subject convener’.
- aa. Subject substitution – where a student is granted credit transfer for a core or restricted elective subject, on condition that they complete a subject in the place of another to recognise their prior learning. This may be granted as an alternative to credit.
- ab. Target subject or course – the subject or course towards which a student is seeking credit.
- ac. Teaching school – the school that teaches the subject in question.
- ad. Transfer credit – credit granted on the basis of subjects completed previously.
- ae. Working days – days when the University is open; excludes weekends and other days when the University is closed.

## Section 3 - Policy

### Management oversight

(7) The [Academic Institutional Leadership Positions Appointments Procedure](#) associated information lists the roles responsible for academic leadership of courses and subjects.

(8) Academic leadership includes leading quality assurance of credit and ensuring that credit practices comply with this policy and its procedures.

### Applications for credit

(9) The [Credit Procedure](#) states the process for applying for credit.

### Eligibility for credit

#### Students’ admission or enrolment status

(10) To be granted credit, a prospective student must meet the minimum entry requirements of the relevant course.

(11) Being eligible for credit towards a course does not guarantee admission to it.

(12) A student may only make a credit application for a course which they:

- a. are currently enrolled in; or
- b. are seeking admission to.

## Recognition of prior learning

(13) To be granted credit for a subject, the student's prior learning must be assessed as meeting the learning outcomes of the subject in level, knowledge and skills.

(14) To be granted unspecified credit, the student's prior formal learning must be assessed as being at the same Australian Qualifications Framework level, and of the same volume of learning, as the points for which the credit will be granted.

## Granting credit

(15) Credit may be granted as;

- a. Block credit – credit granted for whole stages or components of a course, often granted as a number of subject points. Block credit may be specified or unspecified credit.
- b. Specified credit – credit granted for a specific subject or subjects.
- c. Ungraded credit – credit granted as a transfer credit (TCR) or proficiency credit (PCR) to show that credit has been given, rather than an achievement grade.
- d. Unspecified credit – credit that is not for specific subjects, but rather for a number of subject points, to fulfill course requirements.

(16) The [Credit Procedure](#) states how these different types of credit are recorded on the student management system, to appear on students' transcripts.

(17) The course director of the course in which the student is enrolled or seeking enrolment/admission into approves credit to be granted. They may be advised in this decision by the subject coordinator(s).

(18) For higher degree by research students, the Dean, Graduate Studies approves credit.

(19) Where a credit application includes a subject delivered by another faculty or teaching school, consultation with subject matter experts in the faculty or teaching school which delivers the subject is required.

## Effects of granting credit

(20) Where a student is granted credit for a subject, they are not required to complete the subject; the credit in the subject counts towards fulfilling any course requirements that a pass in the subject would meet. See the 'Graded and ungraded credit' section of this policy for details of when credit will count towards a student's grade point average. See the [Credit Procedure](#) for details of how the credit will appear on the student's transcript.

(21) Where an international student studying in Australia on a student visa is granted credit, they may need to request approval for a reduced study load as stated in the [Enrolment Procedure](#) and/or a new confirmation of enrolment document as stated in the [Credit Procedure](#).

(22) Faculties will monitor the effect of standard grants of credit on the academic performance of students who have received the credit to ensure the grant accurately reflects the student's knowledge and abilities. The [Credit Procedure](#) states the process for this monitoring as part of the management of credit precedents.

(23) The Office of Research Services and Graduate Studies will monitor the effect of credit on the academic performance of higher degree by research students who have received credit to ensure the grant accurately reflects the student's knowledge and abilities.

## Credit decisions

(24) Decisions on granting credit, and the assessment of the student's previous learning for these decisions, will be:

- a. timely;
- b. evidence-based;
- c. consistent;
- d. fair;
- e. academically defensible; and
- f. documented in the student's record.

(25) The [Credit Procedure](#) states the criteria to be used in credit decisions.

## Credit precedents

(26) A course director, when approving a credit decision, may also approve the decision to be used as a precedent for subsequent decisions. This should be done in most cases unless there are unique circumstances which make the decision unsuitable as a precedent (for example, credit based on informal learning, which is likely to be unique).

(27) For higher degree by research students, credit precedent decisions are made by the Dean, Graduate Studies.

(28) Where a credit precedent is being created, and it includes a subject delivered by another faculty or teaching school, consultation with subject matter experts in the faculty or teaching school which delivers the subject is required.

(29) All credit precedents must be recorded in the central credit management system by the decision-maker.

(30) Approved credit agreements and arrangements, and articulation agreements and arrangements are also in effect credit precedents that can be applied as long as the approval lasts.

(31) The following staff can apply a credit decision precedent, articulation agreement or arrangement, or credit agreement or arrangement, without higher approval:

Credit decision	Upon delegation by the Executive Dean, Deputy Dean or Course Director	Upon delegation by the Executive Director, Division of Student Administration
For a precedent where the same source course or subject(s) will lead to the same specified and/or unspecified credit	Faculty delegate	Division of Student Administration admissions or credit officer
For a precedent where the original decision provided for some variation in the source course or subjects and in the resulting specified and/or unspecified credit	Faculty delegate	Nil
For a credit arrangement, credit agreement, articulation arrangement or articulation agreement	Faculty delegate	Division of Student Administration admissions or credit officer
Higher degree by research credit arrangement, credit agreement, articulation arrangement or articulation agreement	Dean, Graduate Studies	Nil

(32) Each credit precedent must be reviewed by the faculty that teaches the target subject or course:

- a. within three years of the precedent's initial approval or last review; or
- b. sooner if the source subject or course, or the target subject or course, changes.

(33) The [Credit Procedure](#) states detailed requirements and conditions for applying credit precedents.

### Limits on total credit towards a course

(34) The table of credit limits shows the maximum points that will be granted for a student towards a course leading to an award of the University, where the source of the credit is:

- a. subjects completed at another institution; and/or
- b. subjects completed at Charles Sturt University that have already been counted towards an award of the University (other than in the circumstance stated in clause 38); and/or
- c. previous informal or non-formal learning.

### Table of credit limits

(35) The table below shows the effect of rules for specific types of courses:

Course	Total points of course	Minimum points to be completed at Charles Sturt	Maximum points for which credit can be granted
Diploma	64	64	None#
Associate degree or diploma (as bachelor degree exit point)	128	64	64
Three-year bachelor degree	192	64	128
Four-year bachelor degree or integrated honours> degree	256	64	192
Double degree*	240-272*	64	176-208*
One-year bachelor (honours)^	64	32	32
Graduate certificate^	32	16	16
Graduate diploma^	64	32	32
Master by coursework^	96-128	48-64	48-64

\* This is the standard number of points for double degree programs. However, a specific double degree program may contain fewer or more points depending on the requirements of each of the constituent courses. As double degree requirements vary, students should contact their course director if they have any questions.

^ Credit cannot be granted for research component subjects.

# Exception exists for the NSW TAFE credit arrangement.

(36) Where a course is subject to professional accreditation, a lower limit on credit set by an external professional accrediting body may override these Charles Sturt University limits.

(37) Students may not use the same prior credit towards more than one qualification, as this would constitute double counting of credit.

### Exceptions to credit limits

(38) Credit may be granted beyond the maximum credit limits where the source of the credit is:

- a. subjects completed at Charles Sturt University that have not been counted towards an award of the University (subject to the restrictions below); or

- b. subjects completed in a course that is part of an approved articulated set of courses. Credit beyond the maximum limits for these subjects may be granted towards a higher award in the set, even if the student has graduated with the lower award (but will not be granted for another award at the same level within the set, see clause 39).

(39) The exceptions to credit limits stated at clause 38b will only be applied once for any articulated set of courses. If a student has graduated with an award, any further credit outside of the articulation will be granted within the limits set by the table of credit limits.

(40) The University Courses Committee may approve a grant of credit beyond those stated in the table of credit limits to a cohort.

(41) The faculty boards may approve a grant of credit beyond those stated in the table of credit limits to an individual student on a case-by-case basis.

### **Credit towards a higher degree by research**

(42) The [Higher Degree by Research Policy](#) states the requirements for which a candidate for a higher degree by research may have a reduction in candidature approved, on the basis of a previous period of candidature at another institution.

(43) Credits towards the coursework components of a higher degree by research course should not exceed 50% of the total of the coursework component and will be assessed on a case by case basis.

### **Restrictions on granting credit**

(44) Credit will not be granted if it will:

- a. disadvantage a student from achieving the course learning outcomes;
- b. impair the integrity of an award to which the course leads; or
- c. breach requirements for professional accreditation of an award to which the course leads.

(45) Credit will not be granted:

- a. on the basis of a subject with a fail grade;
- b. on the basis of a grade that indicates the student's performance in the subject was of a fail standard, although they have been permitted to count the subject towards fulfilling requirements for an award (grades such as conceded pass, terminating pass, etc.);
- c. where a pass in a country or institution is known to be below 50%;
- d. for a research component subject;
- e. for part of a subject, an individual assessment task, element or modules within a subject, but only for the subject as a whole;
- f. on the basis of study completed while the student was excluded from Charles Sturt University or another institution as a penalty for academic progress or misconduct; or
- g. on the basis of credit that has been granted towards another course: the student's original prior learning must be assessed and must meet the recency requirement stated in this policy.

(46) A student cannot replace a substantive grade with a credit grade.

(47) Where a student is concurrently enrolled in two courses, they cannot be granted forward credit from one course towards the other beyond the limits in the table (clause 35).

(48) Where a student is concurrently enrolled in two courses or a double degree course, and they are eligible under clause 38 for credit for beyond the maximum limits, the credit will only be applied to one course or one component of the double degree.

(49) A student may, however, be granted credit on the basis of credit previously granted, where the previous credit was for:

- a. a double degree course and the student is transferring to a single degree that is a component of the double degree; or
- b. a single degree and the student is transferring to a double degree of which the single degree is a component.

(50) Where a postgraduate course requires an undergraduate degree in a specific discipline for entry, a student in the course will not be granted unspecified credit solely on the basis of completion of the subject in the undergraduate course. The course director:

- a. may require evidence of additional non-formal learning which has developed their knowledge i.e. work experience or professional development;
- b. may require the student to complete a substitute subject. For more information regarding subject substitution, refer to the [Enrolment Policy](#) and the [Enrolment Procedure](#);
- c. must have the credit and/or precedent approved by the head of school.

### **Recency requirements for credit**

(51) Credit transfer will not be granted for studies completed more than 10 years before the date on which the student applies for the credit.

(52) The faculty board may approve a shorter recency requirement for credit transfer in disciplines where knowledge and/or skills are changing frequently or accreditation requirements specify a time-frame.

(53) Where a student's previous study is outside the recency time-frame for credit transfer, they may be granted proficiency credit on the basis of:

- a. the study; plus
- b. evidence that they have kept their knowledge and skills from the study current by continuing professional development, professional practice and/or other means.

### **Credit where a student is readmitted after termination of enrolment**

(54) Where a student is readmitted to a course after termination of enrolment, their credit will be reassessed. A course director may decline to grant credit for a subject completed during the student's previous enrolment in the course where they consider the student needs to repeat the subject to update their knowledge or skills.

(55) For higher degree by research students, candidature and coursework credit will be reassessed as per the [Admissions Policy](#) and [Admissions - Entry Requirements \(Higher Degrees by Research\) Procedure](#).

### **Graded and ungraded credit**

(56) A student may be granted graded credit only for the same subject, with the same subject code, completed in a different Charles Sturt University course.

(57) Where graded credit is granted, the same achievement grade is recorded for the subject in the target course, as the student achieved for the subject in the source course. The grade contributes to the student's grade point average in the target course.



## **Credit for informal learning (proficiency credit)**

(58) A student may be granted proficiency credit for a subject where they demonstrate, to the faculty's satisfaction, their proficiency in the learning outcomes of the subject, based on:

- a. their previous non-formal or informal learning; and
- b. where the course director or subject coordinator considers it necessary, an assessment of their proficiency.

## **Subject substitution**

(59) Upon assessment of a credit application, the course director may decline to grant credit but instead identify subject substitution as a more suitable way to recognise the student's prior learning. Unlike credit, subject substitution does not reduce the number of points required to complete an award. The [Enrolment Procedure](#) outlines subject substitution.

## **Credit provisionally provided for a subject currently studied (Forward credit)**

(60) A student who intends to study at another institution, and seek credit for the study towards their Charles Sturt University course, must gain the course director's approval of the forward credit before they enrol at the other institution.

(61) This requirement applies to:

- a. cross-institutional study within Australia: and
- b. study abroad and exchange enrolments outside Australia.

(62) Forward credit may also be granted to a student who has applied for:

- a. transfer from one Charles Sturt University course to another, but is currently enrolled in subjects for the first course for which they will be granted credit in the second course; or
- b. admission to a Charles Sturt University course, but is currently enrolled in subjects for a course at another institution, for which they will be granted credit in the Charles Sturt University course.

(63) The [Credit Procedure](#) states the application process for forward credit.

## **Articulation and credit agreements and arrangements**

(64) Articulation agreements, articulation arrangements, credit agreements and credit arrangements must be reviewed by the Office of Global Engagement and Partnerships before they are submitted.

(65) The executive dean approves the articulation agreements and credit agreements for their faculty, upon recommendation from the relevant course director.

(66) For higher degree by research students, the Dean, Graduate Studies will approve articulation agreements and arrangements, and credit agreements and arrangements.

(67) Only Academic Senate, however, can approve an articulation agreement or credit agreement that grants more credit than the limits for types of courses stated in the table of credit limits (clause 35).

(68) The relevant faculty board approves articulation arrangements and credit arrangements.

(69) The Office of Global Engagement and Partnerships keeps a register of approved articulation agreements and articulation arrangements, and approved credit agreements and credit arrangements.

(70) The relevant faculty adds approved articulation agreements and articulation arrangements, credit agreements and credit arrangements, to the central credit management system and the student management system, so these can:

- a. serve as precedents for applying credit to students who enter by these pathways; and
- b. be published to prospective students in the central credit management system.

(71) The Division of Student Administration adds approved articulation agreements and articulation arrangements, credit agreements and credit arrangements, to the student management system, so these can be used by the admissions workflow as precedents for applying credit to students who enter by this pathway.

## **Review and appeal**

(72) A student who is dissatisfied with a credit decision, and is able to provide additional information or documentation, may request a review of the credit decision.

(73) Review of credit decisions will be undertaken by the associate dean or delegate of higher delegation than the original decision-maker, in the relevant faculty.

(74) A student who is dissatisfied with the review decision may appeal a credit decision. To be considered, an appeal application must meet at least one of the following grounds:

- a. There is evidence of a breach of this policy or the [Credit Procedure](#).
- b. There is evidence that the decision was affected by a conflict of interest.

(75) Credit decision appeals that meet one of these grounds will be investigated by the relevant executive dean or delegate of higher delegation than the original decision-maker, in consultation with subject matter experts.

(76) The executive dean's (or delegate's) decision on the appeal is final.

(77) For higher degree by research students, credit decision appeals will be heard by an appeal panel.

(78) Students should refer to 'Review of and appeal against credit decisions' section of the [Credit Procedure](#) for details on how to request a review or submit an appeal.

(79) The [Credit Procedure](#) states time-frames and requirements for credit decision review requests and appeal applications.

## **Withdrawal of credit**

(80) The course director may approve withdrawal of credit where it was granted through an error in assessment.

(81) For higher degree by research students, credit granted through an error in assessment may be removed by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation).

(82) The Senior Manager, Admissions and Credit, Division of Student Administration or their nominee may approve withdrawal of credit granted as the result of an administrative error.

(83) A student may request that their credit be removed.

(84) Where the course director considers that the student provided false or misleading information in a credit application, they will initiate a student general misconduct investigation under the [Student Misconduct Rule 2020](#).

(85) For higher degree by research students, where the Dean, Graduate Studies considers that false or misleading

information has been provided in a credit application, they will initiate an investigation under the [Student Misconduct Rule 2020](#).

(86) Where a misconduct investigation finds that the student or applicant provided false or misleading information in a credit application, and the credit was granted on the basis of this information, it is recommended that the penalties for the misconduct include withdrawal of the credit.

(87) Credit already granted cannot be withdrawn merely because:

- a. this policy or the [Credit Procedure](#) changes; or
- b. the credit precedent or arrangement that was the basis of the decision to grant the credit changes.

(88) The [Credit Procedure](#) states detailed process requirements and time-frames for withdrawal of credit.

## **Section 4 - Procedure**

(89) The [Credit Procedure](#) supports this policy and should be read alongside it.

## **Section 5 - Guidelines**

(90) Nil.

## Status and Details

<b>Status</b>	Current
<b>Effective Date</b>	1st June 2020
<b>Review Date</b>	1st June 2023
<b>Approval Authority</b>	Academic Senate
<b>Approval Date</b>	18th May 2020
<b>Expiry Date</b>	Not Applicable
<b>Unit Head</b>	Shawn Walker Executive Director, Students
<b>Author</b>	Rebecca Van Mosseveld Administration Assistant, Compliance and Policy
<b>Enquiries Contact</b>	Division of Students