

SGA Advanced Standing and Credit Transfer Policy and Procedure

1. Policy Statement and Purpose

Study Group Australia Pty Ltd (SGA) supports the goals of lifelong learning and is committed to the development of open and accessible guidelines for the granting of credit on the basis of prior learning and experience to increase opportunities for students to access education, improve student mobility between sectors and institutions, and increase the pathways into and between qualifications.

This policy outlines the principles and procedures for the awarding of advanced standing and credit transfer for recognition of prior formal and informal learning and agreed articulation arrangements.

2. Scope

This policy and procedure applies to all students enrolled in an accredited higher education course delivered and awarded by a SGA College listed in the footer of this document and the staff of these colleges.

3. Definitions

Academic Director means the lead senior academic staff member for the College (or their delegate, e.g. Course Coordinator/Head of Program). This position may also be referred to as Director Academic Programs, Dean, Program(s) Manager or College program lead.

Advanced Standing: Recognition of individuals' knowledge and skills whether from formal studies, professional, work or life experience.

Articulation Agreement: An formalised agreement that enables students to progress from one completed qualification to another with admission and/or credit granted in a defined qualification pathway.

AQF: Australian Qualifications Framework.

Credit: Each unit that constitutes a course is made up of a volume of credit of study which is reflected in the unit credit points. Credit is the value assigned for the recognition of equivalence in content and learning outcomes between different types of learning and/or qualifications. The granting of credit reduces the amount of learning required to be undertaken to achieve a qualification and may be attained through advanced standing, credit transfer, recognition of prior learning or articulation. Credit granted can be assigned as specified credit or unspecified credit.

Credit Assessment: An academic assessment of prior learning where there is no formalised articulation arrangement.

Credit Transfer is the process of granting consistent credit outcomes for components of an officially accredited qualification or program of learning based on identified equivalence in content and learning outcomes between a matched or equivalent qualifications.

Credit Transfer Arrangement: A formalised credit transfer arrangement defines the agreed availability of credit transfer from one qualification to another.

Formal Learning: Formal learning is the learning that takes place through a structured program of learning that leads to the full or partial attainment of an officially accredited qualification.

College Director means the most senior staff member for the College (or their delegate). May also be referred to as Centre Director, Principal, or Campus Director.

Informal Learning: Informal learning is learning gained through work, social, family, hobby or leisure activities and experiences. Unlike formal and non-formal learning, informal learning is not organised or externally structured in terms of objectives, time or learning support.

Non-formal Learning: Non-formal learning refers to learning that takes place through a structured program of learning but does not lead to an officially accredited qualification.

PRISMS: The Provider Registration and International Student Management System (PRISMS) is the system used by providers to provide information to the Department of Home Affairs (DHA) and Secretary of DET in connection with an overseas student's course enrolment and course transfer release.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL): RPL is an assessment process that involves assessment of the individual's relevant prior learning (which may include any mix of formal, informal or non-formal learning) to determine the credit outcomes of an individual's application for credit.

Specified Credit: Specified credit is a form of credit granted towards core and/or specified components of a qualification or program of learning.

TEQSA: Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency.

Unspecified Credit: Unspecified credit is a form of credit that is granted in the form of credit points which take the place of elective (i.e. free choice) components of a qualification or program of learning.

4. Policy Provisions

4.1 Principles

SGA's policy for the granting of credit is based on the following broad principles:

- granting maximum credit for prior learning without impinging on the integrity of the discipline requirements, course prerequisite requirements and the student's accomplishment of the qualification outcomes;
- credit through recognition of prior learning is granted only if students granted such credit are not disadvantaged in achieving the expected learning outcomes for SGA's course or qualification; any undue award of credit for material from lower AQF levels or material that is not credibly assessed as being at or approaching the level of SGA's course award is not accepted;
- further enhancing student progression into and between AQF qualifications;
- complying and being consistent with applicable Australian laws, regulations and standards, including those set out in the Higher Education Standards Framework, the National Code, and Australian Qualifications Framework;
- the facilitation of transfer between courses at SGA;
- a consistent approach to the granting of credit;
- recognising the multiple pathways that students take to gain AQF qualifications;
- recognising learning for different types of learning and/or qualifications considering the comparability and equivalence of the learning outcomes, volume of learning, program of study including content, and learning and assessment approaches to the learning required for the applicable academic program; and
- supporting the development of pathways in qualifications design.

Determining the awarding of credit requires academic judgement based on appropriate evidence provided by the individual seeking credit. Senior academic staff determining the granting of

credit must ensure the decision concerning the granting of credit into or towards an award is information based, equitable, transparent, timely and academically defensible.

Determining the amount of credit that may be granted involves assessment of a range of prior learning from:

- recognised higher education institutions;
- accredited vocational education providers;
- a professional association or other similar body;
- work experience or other forms of practical experience, including voluntary work;
- life experience.

4.2 Advanced Standing and Credit Transfer rules

General

1. Entry to SGA courses is based on specific published entry criteria. Decisions regarding student admission eligibility are made independent of any credit decisions.
2. An offer of credit does not guarantee admission into a specific course.
3. Students may be permitted to transfer between courses within SGA after they have commenced studies and before they complete their course and may be eligible to be granted credit transfer for this purpose in accordance with this policy.
4. The assessment of the amount of credit to be granted in a particular course shall be determined by the most senior member of academic staff with responsibility for coordination of the course, to ensure consistency across campuses, and in accordance with this policy.
5. Regardless of the credit granted, the requirements of each course must be fulfilled.
6. Where credit is granted in a course of study it may be “specified” or “unspecified”.
7. Specified credit may be granted where the learning outcomes of a unit of study are met. Unspecified credit may be granted for use towards electives where the body of knowledge demonstrated is of an appropriate level but does not match the learning outcomes of the core unit of study/ies offered.
8. Candidates must complete all SGA course requirements for award of the course from SGA. Other than where specific articulation arrangements have been approved by the Academic Board, the total credit granted for prior learning external to SGA shall not exceed 50% of the total credit points required for the award toward which credit is sought, subject to any credit limitations that may apply to the course or as otherwise approved by the Academic Director (or authorised delegate). The 50% may comprise a mixture of credit for formal study and credit for work and life experiences.
9. Credit granted for units in a specific course cannot automatically be transferred from one course to another.

Credit for prior completed formal studies

1. Credit will not normally be granted for formal study which has been completed more than ten years prior to an application unless there is evidence of continued relevance of this study for the course towards which credit is sought.
2. Units of study which are part of accredited courses provided by registered Higher Education Providers may be recognised for credit towards appropriate courses of SGA.
3. Credit may also be granted for non-award courses offered by registered Higher Education Providers, where appropriate.

4. Credit may be granted for study in qualifications listed on the scope of Registered Training Organisations, where appropriate.
5. Credit may be granted for study in courses provided by a professional association or other similar body, where appropriate.
6. Credit may be granted for training delivered by employers or other similar training, where appropriate.
7. Credit shall be granted for a unit of study where there is substantial overlap with content and/or learning outcomes of the Institution course for which credit is claimed, where appropriate.
8. When assessing credit for formal studies considerations may include (without limitation):
 - 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;
 - the objectives of the particular course and the methods adopted to achieve those objectives;
 - admission requirements to the course;
 - the duration of the course, having regard to entry requirements and course objectives;
 - the breadth, depth and balance in the course material involved and the intellectual effort required;
 - the methods of assessment of student progress;
 - the relative emphasis on the teaching of skills in relation to the study of the discipline;
 - any arrangements for practical training and experience as part of the course.

Credit for prior learning from informal studies and/or prior work or life experiences

1. Credit may be granted for work or life experience where that learning can be documented to the satisfaction of the assessor. The onus shall be on the applicant to provide appropriate evidence or demonstrate the relevant skills, knowledge and understanding.
2. The maximum credit that can be granted for learning from work or life experiences is 25% of the total credit points required for the course toward which credit is sought.
3. When assessing credit for work or life experience considerations may include (without limitation):
 - Authenticity - the applicant has actually demonstrated the learning outcomes that are being claimed;
 - Currency - the learning outcomes are still valid and performable;
 - Quality - the learning has reached the acceptable level;
 - Relevance - the learning is applicable to the unit claimed;
 - Transferability - the learning outcome can be applied outside the specific context in which it was learned;
 - Comparability - the assessment mechanisms adopted ensure that the prior learning is comparable in content and standard with the unit(s) in which credit is sought and the standards applied in assessing prior learning should not be greater than those required to pass the unit(s).

Credit transfer

1. Credit transfer may be granted when a student has completed units whilst undertaking a course with SGA and wishes to transfer to another course before completing the prior course.

2. Credit will be granted for those units already undertaken which form part of the course into which the student is transferring.
3. The grade awarded for the unit completed in the previous course will transfer to the new course.
4. The maximum credit that can be granted in these circumstances is not limited, provided this doesn't impinge on the integrity of the discipline requirements, course prerequisite requirements and the student's accomplishment of the qualification outcomes.

4.3 Establishment of Articulation and Common Credit Transfer Arrangements

SGA may systematically establish formalised, time-bound, articulation arrangements and/or common credit transfer arrangements between accredited qualifications of SGA and other authorised issuing organisations.

These may be across AQF qualifications at the same level, as well as between qualifications at different levels. They are established based on agreed relativities between qualifications and/or the way in which the discipline areas of two qualifications are suited to articulation.

The principles set out in the AQF Qualifications Pathways Policy shall guide SGA's considerations when establishing articulation or credit transfer arrangements for individuals towards higher level AQF qualifications in the same or a related discipline.

4.4 Register of Current Articulation and Common Credit Transfer Arrangements

SGA's higher education colleges shall maintain a register of any confirmed current articulation and common credit transfer arrangements. This shall be made available on the College website.

Individuals who have successfully completed the requirements of a current articulation or common credit transfer arrangement may be awarded admission and/or credit transfer through the arrangement in a defined qualification pathway consistent according to the following principles:

- the quantum of credit granted is determined by the specified articulation or common credit transfer arrangement, and
- the individual must have fully satisfied all terms of the specified articulation or credit transfer arrangement to be granted credit based on the arrangement.

The granting of credit through an articulation or credit transfer arrangement does not preclude any further College or individual student negotiations for additional credit.

5. Procedures

5.1 Applying for Advanced Standing / Credit Transfer

An application for Advanced Standing / Credit Transfer must be made on the appropriate form accessed from the College's Policy and Forms webpage and lodged in the manners set out in the form, normally at the time of application for admission.

The application should be accompanied by sufficient documentary evidence to support the application.

5.2 Assessment of Application

Credit assessment will be undertaken by the appropriate senior member of academic staff at the College location with responsibility for coordination of the course, or a delegate, who will advise the applicant in writing of the outcome of their application and ensure that the decision is recorded in the student's file. The time frame for assessing an application for RPL is 20 working days.

It is the intention of this policy that students should be advised of the credit that is offered at the time they indicate intention to accept an offer of a place in the course, where applicable and reasonable to do so.

International Students

If the applicant is an international student the following applies:

- Where credit is granted before the issue of a Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE), if this varies the actual course duration, the CoE issued to the student will show the reduced course duration.
- Where credit is granted after the issue of a Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE), if this varies the actual course duration, SGA will report the change of course duration to the Department of Home Affairs (DHA) through PRISMS. This may affect the international student's visa entitlements.

A record of the credit granted will be signed by the assessor notified to the student and placed on the international student's file.

5.3 Appeals

A student may appeal against a decision made under this policy through the internal appeals process outlined in SGA's Student Complaints and Appeals Policy. The student has 20 working days after being notified of the decision to lodge a written appeal to the College Director that sets out the student's reason for appealing the intended decision.

5.4 Tracking

Where a significant proportion of students is admitted to a course with credit and RPL, the relevant SGA College shall specifically track the course progress of these students to ensure that their course progress is comparable to other students who have not been granted any credit. Evidence shall be provided to SGA's academic governing body. This evidence can also be provided to TEQSA, if requested.

6. Policy Review

This policy is reviewed at a minimum of once every 5 years by the policy owner (or delegate) to ensure alignment to appropriate strategic direction and its continued relevance to current and planned operations. The next scheduled review of this document is listed in the document history section of this document.

7. Records

Records in association with this policy will be kept in accordance with SGA's Records Management Policy. Confidential documents related to the implementation of the policy will be maintained according to relevant privacy requirements.

8. Related Documents

SGA Student Privacy Policy, SGA Records Management Policy, SGA Student Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure.

9. Related Regulations

This policy has been developed in line with requirements set out in the: Education Services for Overseas (ESOS) Act 2000 (and its amendments); National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 (the National Code) which complements existing national quality assurance frameworks in education and training including the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards), the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF), TEQSA's Guidance Note: Credit and Recognition of Prior Learning (15 March 2019) and other Commonwealth and State legislation and regulatory frameworks and standards including the Privacy Act 1988.

Document Approval

Document ID	SGA Advanced Standing and Credit Transfer Policy and Procedure v3.2 – HE.STU.01.20		
Policy Owner	Head of Governance, Quality, Compliance and Risk SGANZ		
Policy Custodian	Chief Academic Officer SGANZ		
Approved by	Academic Board (West)	Date Approved	3 September 2018
		Date Commencing	15 September 2018

Document History

Commencing Date	Summary of Changes	Next Review Date
20 December 2007	v1 Initial approval by Academic Board	December 2012
24 August 2012	v2 Review, amendment and approval by Academic Board	July 2016
18 September 2014	v3 Minor amendment (Policy adopted also by Academic Board East)	September 2019
15 September 2018	v3 Review, amendment and approval by Academic Board (West) to maintain currency with business and regulatory changes.	September 2023
5 April 2019	v3.1 Minor administrative amendment to maintain currency.	September 2023
27 August 2020	V3.2 Minor amendment to correct RPL application assessment timeframe	September 2023