Advanced Standing Policy

INTRODUCTION

The University is a self-accrediting university governed by the Charles Darwin University Act 2003 and the requirements of the Higher Education Standards Framework as regulated by Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) and the Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTO’s) as regulated by the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA). These standards also reference the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF), which stipulates the policy requirements for qualification levels and types, issuance, pathways and registers. The University self-acredits courses in the Higher Education sector, and is authorised to deliver externally accredited courses and courses from National Training Packages in the Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector.

The development and implementation of this Policy is guided by the following principles:

- A commitment to deliver high quality educational courses;
- Facilitation of student mobility between tertiary providers nationally and internationally;
- Compliance with regulatory and best practice standards; and
- Consistency in application of advanced standing.

STATEMENT OF AUTHORITY

The authority behind this policy is the Charles Darwin University Act 2003 part 3, section 15.

COMPLIANCE

This is a compliance requirement under the:

- Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards);
- Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTO’s); and
- National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students

INTENT

This policy sets out the University’s framework for Advanced Standing within an overarching pedagogical and quality assurance perspective. In so doing, it also ensures compliance with the VET and Higher Education regulatory requirements. The University aims to:

- Enhance student progression into and between qualifications by maximising the Advanced Standing that students can gain for learning already undertaken;
- Recognise the multiple pathways students take to gain qualifications and that learning can be formal, non-formal or informal; and
- Support the development of pathways in qualifications design.
RELEVANT DEFINITIONS

In the context of this document

**Accredited course** documentation means the approved Higher Education course documentation generated through the University’s course accreditation processes, including the specific and common course rules and the VET course rules specified in the relevant Training Packages or the VET Accredited Course Rules;

**Advanced Standing** means a form of credit for any previous learning applied to a course of study;

**Articulation** with Advanced Standing means a process that enables students to progress from one completed qualification to another with admission and or advanced standing in a defined pathway;

**Course Transition** means where a course is superseded by another course leading to the same award and the student may transfer to the newer course;

**Credit Transfer** means a process of Advanced Standing that provides students with agreed and consistent credit outcomes for components of a qualification based on identified equivalence in content and learning outcomes between matched units or qualifications. In VET the equivalence is identified in the Training Package or Accredited Course documentation;

**Duplicate Unit** means where a unit is completed in one incomplete award and is copied via Course Transfer, with its resulting grade, into to another award. The student relinquishes the right to the first award and any successive acknowledgement of this specific unit will be as advanced standing;

**Fields of Education** means those coded and taxonomic groupings of subjects defined, in the [Australian Standard Classification of Education](https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/by%20Publication/1268.0);

**Original Credit** means unit credit earned through Merit-based Assessment Grades and counted towards a first completed award. This is in contrast to credit earned through Advanced Standing;

**Pathway** means a sequence of learning stages that allows students to move through qualification levels with full or partial recognition for the qualifications and/or learning outcomes they already have. Pathways recognise and support an individual’s lifelong learning goals by providing the basis for progression through qualifications and may award credit for prior learning where applicable;

**Pathways Register** means a published listing of accredited pathways and accredited unit advanced standings, including articulated arrangements;

**Specified Credit** means credit that is granted for specific currently accredited unit/s. Units earned through Specified Credit can be core, specialist electives and general electives at specific levels, where permitted by specific Accredited Course documentation;

**Unspecified Credit** means credit that is granted in lieu of completing general electives required for a course. Unspecified Credit is at a specific unit level and volume (credit points), as permitted by specific Accredited Course documentation. Unspecified Credit does not apply to VET; and

**VET National Register** means the register of VET qualification and accredited courses maintained by the Commonwealth Department responsible for VET.
POLICY

Principles

Advanced Standing may be awarded through Credit Transfer or Recognition of Prior Learning. The University requires, in accordance with the Australian Qualifications Framework, that Advanced Standing decisions:

- Be academically defensible and take into account the students’ ability to meet the learning outcomes of the qualification successfully as well as preserving the integrity of the outcomes of the award to which credit applies;
- Be evidence-based, equitable and transparent;
- Be applied consistently and fairly with decisions subject to appeal and review;
- Recognise learning regardless of how, when and where it was acquired, provided that the learning is relevant and current and has a relationship to the learning outcomes of the qualification;
- Be decided in a timely way so that students’ access to qualifications is not unnecessarily inhibited; and
- Be formally documented for the student including any reasons for not giving credit.

Types of Learning

The University recognises three (3) types of Learning, any of which may be attained prior to unit enrolment:

- Formal Learning is learning that takes place through a structured programme of learning that leads to the full or partial achievement of an officially accredited qualification;
- Non-Formal Learning is learning that takes place through a structured programme of learning but does not lead to an officially accredited qualification; and
- Informal Learning is learning gained through work, social, family, hobby or leisure activities and experiences. Unlike Formal or Non-formal Learning, Informal Learning is not organised or externally structured in terms of objectives, time or learning support.

Framework for Awarding Advanced Standing

The University will design its courses to maximise opportunity for student progression between courses with maximum Credit Transfer.

In determining Specified Credit toward Awards, the University will ensure that it takes into account the comparability and equivalence of following factors:

- Learning Outcomes: the expression of the set of knowledge, skills and the application of the knowledge and skills a person has acquired and is able to demonstrate as a result of learning (this is inclusive of the contemporary relevance of the learning outcomes);
- Volume of Learning: identifies the notional duration of all activities required for the achievement of the learning outcomes specified. Full qualifications are expressed in years, partial qualifications, modules or unit are expressed on Annual Hours Curriculum (AHC) for VET and Equivalent Full-Time Student Load (EFTSL) for Higher Education;
- Program of Study (content): often referred to as the discipline or subject matter, or Field of Education (FoE). All specific units are aligned to a specific Field of Education with specific credit
aligned to the specific Field of Education. Unspecified credit should also be aligned to a Field of Education definition;

- Learning and Assessment Approaches: how students learn and how they will be assessed to demonstrate the learning. This includes the methods by which the learner’s assessment was authenticated; and
- Level of Learning: indication of the relative complexity and/or depth of achievement and the autonomy required to demonstrate that achievement (i.e. learning equates to introductory undergraduate). The Units and Course Policy should be used as a reference.

In determining Unspecified Credit toward Awards, the University must ensure that it takes into account the comparability and equivalence of at least the following factors:

- Volume of Learning;
- Program of Study (content); and
- Level of Learning.

Prioritising the Awarding of Advanced Standing

In applying Advanced Standing toward an award:

- Advanced Standing as specified credit should first exhaust core credit options, then specialist electives, then specified general electives;
- Advanced Standing should only be awarded as unspecified credit once specified credit options have been exhausted, and then only if the Accredited Course documentation provides for general electives at a suitable unit level;
- Advanced Standing for a unit should first exhaust credit options available within the Course Rules at the same unit level, then at lower unit levels, then at higher unit levels; and
- Advanced Standing may be granted towards a single commencing award based on more than one (1) completed award, provided that all other relevant requirements are met.

Types of Advanced Standing

The University uses three (3) types of Advanced Standing, the result of which may be the awarding of Unit Credit:

- Credit Transfer:
  - For Higher Education, credit is granted on either a unit (for specified) or unit level (for unspecified) basis for equivalent credit earned through prior formal learning in another course;
  - For VET, credit is granted on a unit basis for equivalent credit earned through prior formal learning, as determined by the National Training Package or Accredited Course documents;
  - The resulting grade is CRDT-TRANS;
  - The total value of credit granted through Credit Transfer cannot exceed the total credit value of original units on which the Credit Transfer was assessed. In counting credit towards the completion of an award, only the Credit Transfer credit value will be counted. The original units for which the Credit Transfer was granted cannot be counted; and
- Credit Transfer should be considered before Recognition of Prior Learning.

- **Duplicate Unit:**
  - Units with Passing Grades earned at the University (other than PC) that have not yet been counted towards a completed award may be carried into another course as a Duplicate Unit, subject to the Accredited Course Rules of the new course; and
  - Duplicate Units are exempt from the following sections of this Policy.

- **Recognition of Prior Learning:**
  - For Higher Education, credit is granted at the University based upon the assessment of an individual’s prior formal, non-formal and informal learning (or a combination thereof) to determine the extent to which that individual has achieved the required learning outcomes of a specified unit. Note that formal learning would ordinarily be considered as part of Credit Transfer, and would only be considered as a component part of an application for Recognition of Prior Learning in the event that it was not granted as Credit Transfer;
  - For Higher Education, Recognition of Prior Learning can be applied only to specified credit. Unspecified credit cannot be granted by Recognition of Prior Learning;
  - For VET, credit is granted at the University based upon the assessment of a person’s prior formal, non-formal and informal learning (or a combination thereof) to determine the extent to which that individual has achieved the required competency outcomes of units within that qualification. Refer to the VET Recognition Procedures;
  - Fees apply for Recognition of Prior Learning assessment; and
  - The resulting grade is RPL.

**Types of Credit Arrangements**

The University’s academic governance processes formally approve the following arrangements. Students may still apply for Advanced Standing outside these arrangements within the remit of policy.

**Articulation with Advanced Standing**

Articulation with Advanced Standing is a process where a formal arrangement is entered into between the University and another Australian or International Higher Education Provider (HEP) or Registered Training Organisation (RTO) in which the University recognises specific Formal Learning at the Provider/RTO as Credit towards specified Award Courses at the University. Such arrangements provide for a student from the Provider or RTO to be admitted to a course with prescribed Advanced Standing.

**Accredited Credit Pathway**

Credit Pathways are recognised pathways into an award with credit transfer that is formally accredited with the award as specified in the Accredited Course Documentation. This advanced standing process type refers to students who have completed one AQF level award and are entering another AQF award.

A pathway will provide either entry into an award (Entry Pathway) or entry into and credit towards an award (Credit Pathway).
Principles for Pathways

The University requires, in accordance with the Australian Qualifications Framework, that pathways:

- Are clear and transparent to students;
- Enable flexibility;
- May be across qualifications at the same level as well as between qualifications at different levels;
- Can facilitate entry into, as well as Advanced Standing towards, qualifications; and
- Eliminate unfair or unnecessary barriers for student access to qualifications.

Cross-Institutional Unit Credit Transfer

Cross-Institutional Unit Credit Transfer formally recognises specific Formal Learning at a Unit level between the University and another Higher Education Provider or Registered Training Organisation as part of the unit accreditation.

Maximum Advanced Standing in AQF Levels 5-10

The maximum amounts of Higher Education credit that may be given for Advanced Standing are set out in the Tables below. This neither guarantees nor necessitates that the maximum advanced standing is applied in any given circumstance. Advanced Standing may not exceed the maximum set out in the table. Further limitations to the granting of Advanced Standing are set out in other sections of this document, as well as in the Common Course Rules and specific Accredited Course Rules.

Maximum Advanced Standing permitted between Awards

HE Undergraduate Credit

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CDU Commencing Award</th>
<th>Completed Award</th>
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HE Undergraduate Credit

### CDU Commencing Award

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Course Level</th>
<th>Maximum Advanced Standing Permissible from each Completed Award</th>
<th>Completed Award</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Certificate IV</td>
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### Advanced Standing Policy

- **Undergraduate Credit**
- **Advanced Diploma (160 CP)**
  - The maximum advanced standing permissible for each of these awards is 100 CP

- **Bachelor Degree (240CP)**
  - The maximum advanced standing permissible for each of these awards is 160CP

- **Bachelor Degree (320CP)**
  - The maximum advanced standing permissible for each of these awards is 240CP

- **Bachelor Hons (embedded) (320CP)**
  - The maximum advanced standing permissible for each of these awards is 240CP

- **Bachelor Honours Degree (80CP)**
  - The maximum advanced standing permissible for each of these awards is 50CP

**Max Advanced Standing Permissible from each Completed Award**

- **Associate Degree / Advanced Diploma (160 CP)**
- **Bachelor Degree (240CP)**
- **Bachelor Degree (320CP)**
- **Bachelor Hons (embed) (320CP)**
- **Bachelor Honours Degree (80CP)**

**Max Advanced Standing towards each unit level**

- **Certificate IV**
- **Diploma**
- **Advanced Diploma**
- **Associate Degree**
- **Bachelor Degree**
- **Bachelor Degree (2 years)**
- **Bachelor Degree 240CP**
- **Bachelor Degree 320CP**
- **Bachelor Honours Degree**
- **Bachelor Hons (embed)**
- **Bachelor Hons Degree**
- **Bachelor Hons Degree 80CP**
- **Graduate Certificate 40CP**
- **Graduate Diploma 80CP**
- **Masters (Coursework) 80CP**
- **Masters (Coursework) 120CP**
- **Masters (Coursework) 160CP**

**NA** = Not Applicable for this award
## HE Postgraduate Credit

### CDU Commencing HE Award

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### Completed Award

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<td>Maximum Advanced Standing Permissible towards each unit level</td>
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### Masters

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NA = Not Applicable for this award

*Units and Courses Policy*, provides for up to 20CP undergraduate units in a Masters course of 120CP, or up to 40CP of undergraduate units in a Masters course of 160CP; provided this is permitted in the Accredited Course documentation.

### Graduate Entry Bachelors

Graduate entry Bachelor Degrees are not included in the above Tables because they are designed on the basis that the student has an appropriate degree upon commencement. However, a student may apply for Advanced Standing into the Graduate Entry Degree based upon formal learning from sources other than the degree used as the basis of admission.
Dual Awards (including Double Degrees)

Dual Awards may vary in structure depending upon the requirements of each single award. As such, consideration of maximum advanced standing for Dual Awards will vary and in each case will be based upon the provisions in the Tables above.

Double Degrees may vary in structure depending upon the requirements of each single award; however, the following maximum credit contributions apply:

- Two-thirds of the credit points that contribute to each single award; and
- Two-thirds of the credit points of a double degree in total.

Research Degrees

The tables above are not intended to prevent progression from a lower AQF Level research degree into a higher AQF Level research degree, such as from a Masters by Research into a Doctoral course. However, defining such progression in terms of credit points may be too restrictive and should be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Advanced standing from Undergraduate to Postgraduate courses

Credit cannot be awarded from an undergraduate course into a postgraduate course except when the undergraduate units are included in the accredited postgraduate course.

Limits to Advanced Standing

Provision of Advanced Standing is, in all cases, subject to all relevant requirements being met.

Minimum Credit Requirements for Higher Education Courses

In addition to satisfying the course requirements, a student must enrol in, undertake the learning activities of, and attain passing Grades other than RPL or CRDT-TRANS for, a minimum of one-third of the award course, or a minimum of one (1) year full-time equivalent, whichever is the lesser, to receive an award from the University.

General Limits for Higher Education Courses

- A CRDT-TRANS grade may not be presented as evidence for a new application for Advanced Standing.
- A PC grade may not be presented as evidence for an application for Advanced Standing.
- Application of Advanced Standing must abide by the requirements of the Accredited Course documentation, the Common Course Rules and the Units and Courses Policy;
- Honours Thesis Units (Unit Level 700) or Masters Thesis Units (Unit Level 800) that have been counted towards a completed award may not be used for Advanced standing purposes.

Credit Transfer between Levels

- Advanced Standing may be granted at a maximum of two (2) Unit Levels higher than the original Formal Learning, but only when:
  - The learning outcomes are comparable; and
  - Are applied to an undergraduate award.
- Credit at AQF levels 1-3 may not count towards AQF levels 5 and above, unless specified in the Training Package or Accredited Course Documents and in accordance with the maximum in the Table above.
- Credit at AQF Levels 4-7 may not count towards qualifications at levels 8 and above, unless specified in the Accredited Course Documents and in accordance with the maximum in the Table above.

**Currency of Formal Learning**

- Higher Education Currency – Higher Education credit older than seven (7) years normally is not eligible for Credit Transfer. In exceptional circumstances, the Head of School may approve credit older than seven (7) years for Credit Transfer, where the learning is still deemed relevant; and
- VET Currency - VET credit is deemed current if the unit, or an equivalent unit, is available within the offered courses. Equivalency is as defined within the relevant National Training Package or Accredited Course.

**Common Units**

The University may make decisions in relation to Advanced Standing into the Common Units. The Common Units Management Committee will approve any *Grounds for exemption from Common Units* and may amend these decisions from time-to-time.

**Rescinding Advanced Standing**

Advanced Standing Credit granted to a student may be rescinded:

- At the request of the student. Requests for rescinding Credit may incur an administrative fee. Requests must be signed off by a relevant academic staff member of the School and should not be unreasonably denied;
- At the absolute discretion of the University, in cases where an error has been made in assessing the Advanced Standing application; and
- At the absolute discretion of the University, in cases where the documentation provided by the applicant has been shown to be incomplete, misleading (in which case the *Academic and Scientific Misconduct Policy* may be invoked) or invalid.

**Appeals of Advanced Standing Decisions**

A student who wishes to contest a decision to grant or rescind Advanced Standing Credit may appeal the decision in accordance with the University’s *Students - Academic Grievance Procedures*.

**Pathways Registers**

The University will maintain Pathways Registers that comply with the requirements of the *Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards)* and the *AQF Qualifications Pathways Policy*.

**Pathways with Advanced Standing and Unit Credit Transfers**

The University will publish and promote formally approved Higher Education credit arrangements that includes:
• Advanced Standing;
• Credit Pathways:
  o Arrangements for Articulation with Advanced Standing; and
  o Accredited Credit Pathways; and
• Cross-Institutional Unit Credit Transfer.

Published Higher Education Pathways and Credit Arrangements are maintained via the Advanced Standing Precedents Database. All Advanced Standing decisions that meet the criteria for being a Precedent will be recorded in the Precedents Database. The Precedent database will be consulted in relation to any Advanced Standing application being considered. The Precedents Database will not include Recognition of Prior Learning.

VET Credit arrangements are documented in the Training Package or Accredited Course information. Where credit for a unit of competence has been attained previously from a Registered Training Organisation, and that unit of competency is recognised in the current Training Package or Accredited Course documentation, a Credit Transfer will be granted; therefore not captured and published through the Precedents Database.

Pathways without Advanced Standing

The University will publish information about pathways between courses according to, at least, AQF levels and Fields of Education.

Monitoring and Review of Advanced Standing

Advanced Standing decisions will be periodically reviewed to determine that they:

• Do not academically disadvantage students;
• Remain compliant with the Higher Education Standards Framework;
• Comply with the Accredited Course and Unit Documentation; and
• Maximise applicability with qualification on the VET National Register.

The University will:

• Review regularly, the validity and equity of guidelines and criteria for the assessment of applications for Advanced Standing;
• Annually review the Pathways Registers;
• Every three (3) years or as required, audit Advanced Standing precedents and decisions;
• When a Training Package is changed, review and amend where necessary affected pathways;
• Monitor the progress of students who have been granted Advanced Standing to calibrate the academic appropriateness of Advanced Standing; and
• Review articulation agreements with other institutions as they expire or as the related course or Training Packages change.

ESSENTIAL SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Internal

Academic and Scientific Misconduct Policy
Common Course Rules - Associate Degree

Common Course Rules Bachelor Degree

Common Course Rules Bachelor Honours Degree

Common Course Rules Diploma

Common Course Rules Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

Common Course Rules Graduate Certificate

Common Course Rules Graduate Diploma

Common Course Rules Masters by Coursework

Common Course Rules Masters by Research

Higher Education Course Accreditation and Re-Accreditation Procedures

Grading Policy

Higher Education Minor and Major Unit Amendment Procedures

Students - Academic Grievance Procedures

Student Breach of Academic Integrity Procedures

Unit and Courses Policy

VET Recognition Procedures

External

Australian Skills Quality Authority (Commonwealth)

Australian Qualifications Framework (Commonwealth)

AQF Qualifications Pathways Policy (Commonwealth)

Charles Darwin University Act 2003 (NT)

Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 (Commonwealth)

Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2015 (Commonwealth)

Higher Education Support Act 2003 (Commonwealth)

National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training Services to Overseas Students 2017 (Commonwealth)

National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011 (Commonwealth)
Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015 (Commonwealth)

Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011 (Commonwealth)
**Document History and Version Control**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Version</th>
<th>Date Approved</th>
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<th>Brief Description</th>
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<td>1.00</td>
<td>20 Nov 2017</td>
<td>Academic Board</td>
<td>Creation of original document and upload to CDU website.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>15 Dec 2017</td>
<td>Governance</td>
<td>• Conversion to new Governance template due to new University branding</td>
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<td>• Added Sponsor, Pro Vice-Chancellor, Education and Student Success</td>
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