

Credit for Recognition of Prior Learning

1. Purpose

This Policy and Procedure outlines the principles governing the granting of academic credit for the recognition of prior learning (RPL) and the provision of recognition for Advanced Standing at Australia Advance Education Group (AAEG), trading as Sydney International School of Technology and Commerce (SISTC). It aligns with the requirements of The Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 (Threshold Standards), particularly Standard 1.2, the Australian Qualification Framework (AQF), the National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 (National Code), and the Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 (ESOS Act).

The primary purpose of this policy is to enable the appropriate recognition of prior learning based on the evidence provided.

It aims to:

- facilitate student progression into and between AQF qualifications
- acknowledge the diverse pathways students take to achieve AQF qualifications, whether through formal, non-formal, or informal learning
- support the development of flexible qualification pathways.

2. Scope

This policy and procedure apply to all prospective students at Sydney International School of Technology and Commerce (SISTC). It encompasses the processes, criteria, and guidelines governing the assessment and granting of academic credit for prior learning experiences, including formal, non-formal, and informal learning. All courses and qualifications offered by SISTC are subject to this policy and procedure. Additionally, this procedure is followed by professional and academic staff involved in the assessment and administration of credit for recognition of prior learning.

3. Definitions

At SISTC the term 'credit' encompasses a broad range of credit types, including specified and unspecified credit, exemptions, advanced standing, credit transfers, opportunities for substitute learning, and learning pathways.

- **Recognition of prior learning (RPL):** This assessment process involves evaluating an individual's relevant prior learning, including formal, informal, and non-formal learning, to determine the credit outcomes for their application.
- **Formal learning:** Learning that occurs through a structured course leading to full or partial achievement of an officially accredited qualification.
- **Informal learning:** Learning acquired through work, social, family, hobby, or leisure activities and experiences. It lacks structure in terms of objectives, time, or learning support.
- **Non-formal learning:** Learning that occurs through a structured course but does not lead to an officially accredited qualification.
- **Census Date:** The official deadline for finalizing a student's enrolment and fees for each teaching period, as published on the SISTC website.
- **Credit transfer:** A process that provides students with agreed and consistent credit outcomes for completed components of a course of study based on identified equivalence in content and learning outcomes between matched courses of study.
- **Block credit:** Credit granted towards whole stages or components of a course.
- **Specified credit:** Credit granted towards a specific unit or units within a course.
- **Unspecified credit:** Credit granted towards elective unit or units within a course.

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- **Advanced Standing:** The result of assessing an individual's relevant prior learning (including formal, informal, and non-formal learning) to determine the credit outcomes, resulting in units granted as equivalently completed whole unit exemptions in the student management system, noted on Academic Transcripts and AHEGS statements as Advanced Standing.
- **Nested course:** A course of study leading to a higher education award that includes articulation arrangements from a lower-level education award to a higher-level education award to enable multiple entry and exit points. It may include shorter courses within longer ones within the same discipline, both at the same AQF level. New enrolment applications apply when students wish to continue study from a nested course.

4. Principles

SISTC applies equitable and evidence-based principles to provide a transparent process for determining an appropriate amount of Advanced Standing credit for each student. SISTC maintains clear, accessible, and transparent policies and processes that offer qualification pathways and credit arrangements for students.

These policies and processes are:

- offered free of charge to students at enrolment
- designed to ensure that pathways into and between qualifications are available to all students for all relevant qualifications
- made publicly available, widely promoted, and easily accessible to all prospective and existing students to enable them to:
 - make well-informed choices between alternative pathways
 - consider the available credit opportunities
- regularly reviewed to maximise applicability to new and updated qualifications and student and industry needs

Decisions regarding credit application outcomes into or towards AQF qualifications:

- are evidence-based, equitable, and transparent
- are 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 learning is relevant, current (acquired within the last 5 years), demonstrable, evidence-based, and related to the learning outcomes of the qualification.
- are academically defensible and consider students' ability to successfully meet course and unit learning outcomes.
- are decided promptly to avoid unnecessary hindrance to student access to qualifications.
- ensure that credit outcomes meet prerequisites or other specified requirements for entry into a course leading to advanced standing into a qualification or for the partial fulfillment of the requirements of a qualification.
- are considered in terms of overall impacts of a shortened course on student readiness for potential employment.

5. Policy Statement

Details of credit granted as Advanced Standing are provided to prospective students before enrolment, as indicated in the SISTC Admissions and Enrolment Policy. Advanced Standing is evaluated on a case-by-case basis, considering the merits of each case. Educational judgments relating to the equivalence of learning outcomes are based on the discipline context, content, standards, and assessment in the course the applicant has successfully completed. Key considerations for decisions include maintaining the integrity of the courses and ensuring that students can complete units without disadvantage in achieving outcomes.

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Credit arrangements are outlined as course rules when courses are proposed or revised. Assessment of Advanced Standing is clearly documented and submitted as part of the course revision process. Specified credit for Advanced Standing may be granted upon successful completion of prior learning in relevant disciplines to achieve learning outcomes substantially equivalent to relevant unit/s. Unspecified credit or block credit may be granted when prior learning aligns with the broad learning outcomes of units, or the course being undertaken. Unspecified credit is limited to non-core or elective components of a course.

The maximum unit credit granted for recognition of prior learning from an incomplete course is 50 percent of the total credit points of a SISTC course. Students may obtain specified/unspecified credit for up to 50% of units in a specified course. In a course, unspecified credit may only be granted for two SISTC units and cannot comprise a core or major unit. In a Diploma course, unspecified credit may be granted for one SISTC unit and cannot comprise a core or major unit. Specified credit requires evidence of a minimum of 80% coverage of unit content.

The maximum credit granted for recognition of prior learning from a completed course, which does not substantially match any SISTC nested course, is 50 percent of the total credit points of the applicable course. When completed units substantially match the learning outcomes, knowledge, and skills of equivalent SISTC units, credit granted as recognition of that prior learning is considered only in relation to full unit correspondence, with no partial unit credit.

Prior learning completed within the last five years for undergraduate courses and three years for postgraduate courses is considered current for assessing Advanced Standing. Exceptions to the time period may be approved in individual cases by the Academic Dean.

5.1 Evidence of informal or non-formal learning

To apply for credit based on informal or non-formal learning, students must provide a statement and documentary evidence. Evidence should document prior learning and demonstrate one or both of the following:

- The standard of learning required for admission to the chosen course
- Achievement of the specific learning outcomes of the unit/s and course.

Documentary evidence should include:

- Current CV
- Reference letters on official letterhead from current or past employers (including direct line managers), verifying knowledge, skills, duration of service, and experience
- Position description/s
- A completed credit application form for each unit for which credit is sought.

5.2 Application Due date

Students should apply for credit transfer or recognition of prior learning before the start of a teaching period as part of the enrolment process. Under special circumstances, applications may be considered after the start of the teaching period but before the census date. Beyond the census date, no applications are considered.

6. Procedures

6.1 Credit

Credit transfer may be approved when there is evidence of successful and certified completion of a unit delivered by another educational institution or through work experience where that unit is equivalent to a SISTC unit in terms of learning outcomes, volume of learning, assessment, and content.

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6.2 Advanced Standing

Credit may be granted for previous learning where evidence demonstrates equivalence in terms of learning outcomes, volume of learning, assessment, and content.

6.3 Block Credit

We do not grant block credit. However, students who have successfully completed a SISTC nested diploma course and are advancing to the associated bachelor course, or who have successfully completed a graduate certificate or graduate diploma and are advancing to the related master's course, automatically receive advanced standing in the higher AQF level course if the prerequisite course has been completed.

6.4 Articulation Agreements

SISTC maintains a list of articulation agreements with other institutions on the application form, guaranteeing the granting of credit at the unit correspondence level. Students can refer to the list on our website for guidance.

6.5 Application Process

Students should apply for credit transfer or recognition of prior learning before the beginning of a teaching period as part of the application for enrolment process. Under special circumstances, applications are considered following the start of the teaching period but prior to the census date. Beyond the census date, no applications are considered. Credit Application forms for Advanced Standing applications are linked in this policy and directly accessible on our website. Applications provide the opportunity for students to provide all evidence for the application and include a student declaration that the information supplied in the application is accurate. All applications are bound by relevant legislation and policies and procedures.

6.6 Assessment of Credit applications

Initially, each Credit for RPL application is reviewed by our dedicated professional staff. During this initial assessment, the application is cross-checked against our Precedent Credit Register to identify any precedent credit units (previously approved) that may apply. If the application contains new units not found in the credit register, the professional staff member forwards the application to the Academic Dean or Associate Dean of Learning and Teaching for further evaluation. The Academic Dean or Associate Dean of Learning and Teaching provides clear, documented processes for assessing the equivalence of student prior learning with the outcomes of the course.

Assessment of Advanced Standing involves determining:

- the type of credit for Advanced Standing granted (i.e., admission, credit, exemption).
- whether the prior learning meets the admission criteria specified for the course.
- how accurately the prior learning demonstrated in the application matches the learning outcomes of the SISTC course and units.

This may involve assessment of:

- unit requirements
- unit learning outcomes in the context of course learning outcomes
- content
- assessment
- contact hours
- professional placement hours
- previous relevant work experience details.

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Assessment is based on:

- precedence approved, administered, and recorded in the Credit Register and subject to relevant policies and procedures.
- individual assessment of record of prior study or portfolio of demonstrated evidence.

For students applying for post graduate courses this assessment may also include written submission from an applicant's employer and/or personal statement, written examination, and/or interview with the Academic Dean.

Credit assessment methods:

- address the specific evidence required to demonstrate equivalencies and prior achievement of the learning outcomes and assessment requirements of the particular qualification for which credit is sought
- provide a range of ways that demonstrate required outcomes have been met
- are in accordance with the framework set by existing policies and procedures.

Credit applications are assessed by the Academic Dean, Associate Dean of Learning and Teaching, or senior academic staff, and decisions notified in writing to the student within ten business days (excluding weekends and public holidays).

When approved, an application for credit for Advanced Standing is recorded in the Credit Register and on the student record for an enrolled student. If the approval results in a change of course duration, then details are recorded. Where a precedent, rule or an articulation or credit transfer agreement with another accredited higher education provider is in place, the DDSS may undertake assessment and processing of Advanced Standing for formal learning for credit and notify the student in writing of automatic related advanced standing applied.

6.7 Appeals Process

If a student believes that their application for credit or recognition of prior learning has been wrongly rejected, they should first make an application under the provisions of the Student Complaints, Appeals, and Grievances Policy and Procedures. The appeal may also subsequently be considered under the Review of Grades and Academic Appeals Policy.

An applicant or enrolled student may appeal the decision by submitting a written notice of appeal to the Academic Dean or nominee, typically within ten business working days of receiving the decision. The notice of appeal must state the grounds on which the applicant or student is seeking the appeal.

An appeal is based on the following grounds:

- procedural irregularity
- presentation of new evidence.

The Academic Dean (or nominee) considers the appeal and may consult with any relevant academic staff and/or the student. The normal timeframe for assessing an appeal is within ten (10) working days from the receipt of the appeal.

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7. Monitoring and Review

SISTC continuously monitors the application of this Policy to ensure ongoing regulatory compliance and process improvement, as outlined in the *Compliance, Quality Assurance, and Review Strategy and Plan*.

8. Relevant Legislation and Standards

This policy aligns with the following regulations and standards:

Australian Qualifications Framework

Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 Domain 1

National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 Standard 2: Recruitment of an Overseas Student

9. Key Related Documents

Documents related to this policy include:

SISTC Compliance, Quality Assurance and Review Strategy and Plan

SISTC Admissions and Enrolment Policy and Procedures

SISTC Student Complaints, Appeals and Grievances Policy and Procedures

SISTC Student Recruitment Information Policy

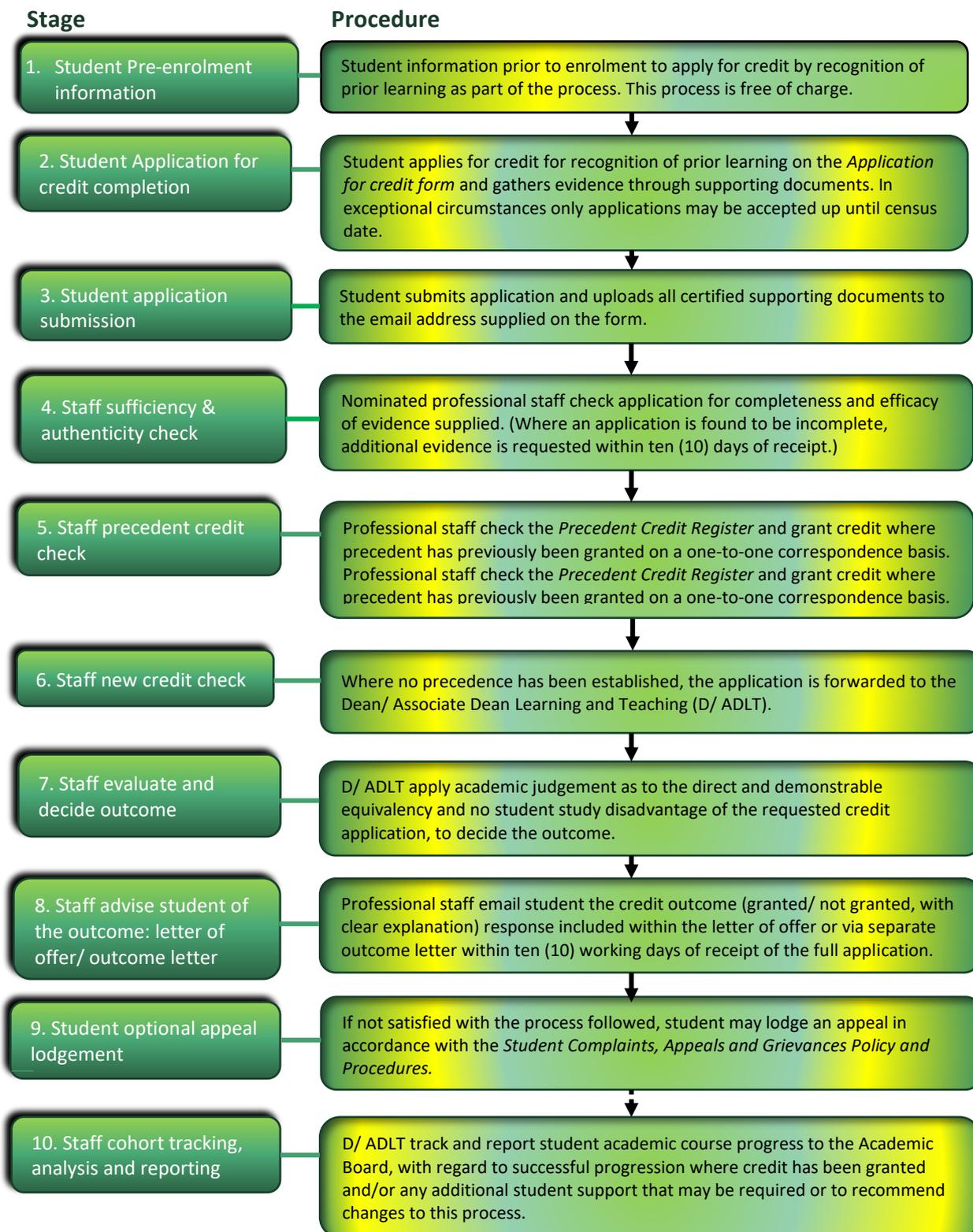
SISTC Review of Grades and Academic Appeals Policy

Notes

Responsible Officer	Chair, Academic Board
Approval Authority /Authorities	Academic Board
Date Approved	27 July 2017
Date of Commencement	
Date for Review	2023
Documents Superseded by this Policy	None
Amendment History	<p>20 September 2018, 31 January 2019; 6 March 2019 (Board of Directors Endorsement) <i>Credit Transfer and Recognition of Prior Learning Policy</i></p> <p>V1.0 updated with the SISTC logo July 2020</p> <p>V1.1 title changed to <i>Credit Transfer and Advanced Standing Policy</i> approved by Academic Board 3 June 2020.</p> <p>V1.2 updated with the approved changes to the senior management structure 28 April 2021 and the changes to the HESF 21 1 July 2021</p> <p>V2.0 approved by the Academic Board 15 November 2021 and released to the website after receiving accreditation of the MIT 5 April 2022 and provision of CRICOS Course Codes 28 April 2022</p> <p>03.00 Updated to include key delegations; revised and simplified process, include RPL and informal learning; TEQSA Guidance Notes; new flowchart, updates, and simplification to forms. 05 September 2023</p>

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Appendix A – Application Procedure Flowchart



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Appendix B – Advanced Standing Application Form Requirements

Information for Students

The *SISTC Advanced Standing Policy and Procedure* (link) recognises previous study or learning that can be counted towards a SISTC qualification. This process can reduce the number of units required to complete an undergraduate or postgraduate course. Different types of study are assessed for equivalency including formal credentialled studies and informal (non-credentialled) learning. As a SISTC student, you can apply to have specific units (subjects) credited toward your course (i.e., core subjects or specified electives). You can also apply to have unspecified credit applied to your course (i.e., electives that will appear as “unspecified credit” on your academic transcript). Students are required to present evidence to prove that they have demonstrated sufficient knowledge, skills, and or experience to meet both the school’s requirements and the appropriate level of study as stipulated by the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF).

1. Completion of Application

Students must complete the application form (over page) and submit to SISTC, ensuring that they have:

1. Completed the application form and signed the declaration.
2. Supplied all required evidence (see list below). Please note applications will not be processed until both of the above have been completed and submitted.

2. Evidence Required

Students must provide:

- Copies of subject/unit outlines (information must include learning outcomes, weekly structure, topic list, assessment details, contact hours/student workload).
- Verified copies of certificates and transcripts (copies to be certified by a Justice of the Peace or originals sighted by a SISTC staff member or approved agent). Documents in a foreign language will need to be officially translated to English.

Students applying on the basis of relevant work experience will need to provide a written reference from their employer detailing the relevant work experiences including currency and how they relate to the post graduate course applied for. Students may also be requested to provide a personal written statement, attend a written assessment, or attend an Interview with the Academic Dean.

3. Advanced Standing Assessment Process

Applications for undergraduate courses are reviewed by the Associate Dean or nominee. Applications for post-graduate courses are reviewed by the Academic Dean or nominee. The student will be advised in writing of the outcome or additional information requested within ten (10) working days after the completed application has been submitted and received by SISTC Student Administration.

4. Application Deadline

Students should apply for credit transfer or recognition of prior learning before the beginning of a teaching period as part of the application for enrolment process. Under special circumstances, applications will be considered following the start of the teaching period but prior to the census date. Beyond the census date, no applications will be considered.

5. Application Restrictions

Students can only apply for credit within their first year of study at SISTC for units and/or work experience that have already been completed in the past five (5) years

for undergraduate courses and three (3) years for postgraduate courses. Students should endeavour to apply for Advanced Standing for courses currently in progress as soon as their official academic transcripts are available.

6. Rules for Exemptions

50% rule

Students may obtain specified/unspecified credit for up to 50% of units in a specified course. In a **course**, unspecified credit may only be granted for two SISTC units and cannot comprise a core or major unit. In a Diploma course, unspecified credit may be granted for one SISTC unit and cannot comprise a core or major unit.

80% content coverage

Evidence of a minimum of 80% coverage of unit content is required for specified credit to be granted.

Exemption for an exemption

Previous study granted as Advanced Standing/Exemption at another institute may not be used for Advanced Standing into a SISTC course. This will be at the discretion of the Academic Dean, Associate Dean, or appointed delegate.

Experience and study must be current

Any study cited in an Advanced Standing application must have been completed no more than five years for undergraduate applications and three years for postgraduate prior to the date of application.

Study must be at the equivalent AQF level

Approved study must be at a comparable AQF level.

Professional Recognition

Where the course has corresponding applicable accreditation, we make every effort to ensure that any and all credit granted towards advanced standing is compliant with accreditation body requirements.