



Policy and Procedures –

Credit for Prior Learning (CPL)

APPROVED

THE INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES



1. Overview

Granting credit and providing recognition for prior learning (CPL) ensures that students commence study both at a level that appropriately recognises their prior learning experiences and are not required to repeat equivalent learning successfully undertaken in another context.

The Institute of International Studies (“TIIS”) is committed to developing open and accessible guidelines to granting CPL towards a course of study based on prior learning, whether from formal studies or professional work experience.

This *Policy and Procedures* is designed to:

- a. Optimise the **Credit for Prior Learning (CPL)** students can gain for prior learning while preserving the integrity of learning outcomes and discipline requirements of the award to which it applies.¹
- b. Meet the best practice principles outlined in the *AQF Qualifications Pathways Policy*²

This *Policy and Procedures* on the granting of CPL will be:

- a. Evidence based, clear, equitable, accessible, and transparent,
- b. Applied consistently and fairly with decisions subject to appeal and review,
- c. Cognisant of all prior learning regardless of how, when and where it was acquired, provided that the prior learning is relevant and current and has a relationship to the learning outcomes of the course,
- d. Academically defensible and consider the students’ chance of success in a course,
- e. Decided in a timely way,
- f. Cognisant that pathways into and between TIIS and other awards are available to all students by furthering articulation pathways with other higher education and vocational training providers and facilitating transfer between courses at TIIS, and
- g. Formally documented for the student including any reasons for not granting CPL.

2. What does CPL Encompass?

According to *TEQSA Guidance Note: Credit and Recognition of Prior Learning*, ‘Credit’ is a benefit provided to a student by waiving one or more of the normal requirements for completion of a course of study, such as not having to complete a particular unit of study. Credit is obtained on the basis of evidence that the student has already undertaken learning that is deemed to be equivalent to the parts of the course of study for which credit has been granted. For the purposes of this Guidance Note, credit is interpreted broadly to include:

- specified and unspecified credit
- exemptions
- advanced standing
- credit transfers
- opportunities for substitute learning

¹ Higher Education Standards Framework – Qualification Standard 3

² Australian Qualifications Framework Handbook – January 2013

- other similar outcomes.

'Credit for Prior Learning' (CPL) is defined in the Australian Qualifications Framework as a process through which eligibility for the award of credit is assessed, through assessment of formal, informal and non-formal learning.

3. Granting of Credit for Prior Learning (CPL)

3.1 General Principles for Credit for Prior Learning (CPL)

- Entry to TIIS courses is based on specific published entry criteria and decisions regarding student selection will be in accordance with *Policy and Procedures – Student Selection and Admissions*.
- An offer of CPL does not guarantee admission into a specific course.
- The assessment of the CPL to be granted in particular courses shall be determined by the Program Coordinator within the framework of this *Policy and Procedures* and must be periodically reviewed by the Teaching and Learning Committee.
- Regardless of the CPL granted, the requirements of each course must be fulfilled.
- CPL can be in the form of specified or, where appropriate, block and/or unspecified CPL.
- Applicants for a degree/award from TIIS must complete a minimum amount of the course through TIIS. Total CPL external to TIIS shall not generally exceed 50% of the total credit points required for the award toward which CPL is sought—unless it is internal CPL or approved and justified by the Dean.
- The 50% may comprise a mixture of CPL *for formal study from a different program* and CPL for work experience. However, the portion of CPL granted for learning from relevant and documented work experience must not exceed 20% of the total credit points of the relevant award.
- CPL granted for a specific course may (with approval of the Dean) be transferred from one course to another – in such cases of internal transfer or *a credit transfer based on the equivalent program from another institution*, the 50% limit may be exceeded as long as the integrity of the target award is not impaired.
- This *Policy and Procedures* shall consider only units at a high “P” (pass; 55%) or above. Where an applicant has completed a unit at another institute at the equivalent of a low “P” (a pass < 55%) it is in the best interests of the applicant to redo the unit and CPL will normally not be granted.
- CPL will not be given for subjects which have previously been awarded CPL toward a completed degree/award – either by TIIS or another higher-education institution.
- The CPL awarded by TIIS must not be based on CPL awarded by another institute—instead, original transcripts/reason behind the CPL awarded by another institute must be evaluated.
- Undergraduate units (AQF 6-7) are generally not recognised for Graduate (AQF 8-9) CPL. However, where a student has successfully completed an undergraduate degree in the discipline of a graduate foundation subject, CPL may be granted.

3.2 Credit for Formal Studies

- CPL will not normally be granted for formal study completed more than 10 years prior to application. This restriction may be waived if the applicant has, in the intervening years remained current by progressing through relevant work experience at a significant level (e.g. not clerical work).
- Graduate CPL may be granted for the successful completion of:
 - Units/subjects which form part of an accredited course provided by a recognised higher education provider,

- ii. Accredited courses at AQF-6 and above offered by a registered vocational training provider (NB: course at an AQF-6 must be accompanied by significant work experience),
 - iii. Courses provided by a professional association or other similar body, and
 - iv. Training delivered by employers or other similar bodies.
- c. CPL may be granted where there is substantial overlap (at least 75%) with content and/or learning outcomes of TIIS units for which CPL is claimed.
- d. When assessing CPL, the following will be considered, the:
- i. 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,
 - ii. Objectives of the course and the methods adopted to achieve those objectives,
 - iii. Admission requirements to the course,
 - iv. Duration of the course, having regard to entry requirements and course objectives,
 - v. Breadth, depth, and balance in the course/unit material involved and the intellectual effort required,
 - vi. Methods of assessment, and
 - vii. Arrangements for practical training and experience as part of the course.

3.3 Credit for Prior Learning from Work Experience

- a. CPL may be granted for work experience where the relevance of that learning can be documented to the satisfaction of the Dean.
- b. The onus shall be on the applicant to provide appropriate evidence or demonstrate the relevant skills, knowledge, and understanding.
- c. The maximum CPL that can be granted for learning from work experience is 20% of the total credit points required for the course toward which CPL is sought and that 20% forms part of the 50% overall cap on the CPL awarded toward a given course.
- d. When assessing work-based CPL, the following will be considered:
 - i. authenticity – the learning outcomes that are being claimed are well demonstrated,
 - ii. currency – the learning outcomes are still valid and performable,
 - iii. quality – the learning has reached an acceptable level,
 - iv. relevance – the learning is applicable to the unit claimed,
 - v. transferability – the learning outcome can be applied outside the specific context in which it was learned, and
 - vi. comparability – the prior learning is comparable in content and standard with the unit/s of study in which CPL is sought.

3.4 Internal Transfer between Courses

- a. CPL may be granted when a student has successfully completed units while undertaking a course with TIIS and wishes to transfer to another course within TIIS.
- b. CPL may be granted for those units already undertaken which form part of the course into which the student is transferring.
- c. The maximum CPL that can be granted in these circumstances is not limited.
- d. Credit for a TIIS subject cannot be applied twice, except where there is a formal study path for a double or combined degree.

3.5 Cross-Institutional Credit

- a. While CPL is normally associated with prior studies, there are circumstances where a student may want to study one or more subjects at another institution. Student must apply to the Program Coordinator for written permission to apply future subjects at another institution— all other CPL rules then apply for that credit to be counted as part of a TIIS degree.

- b. In exceptional circumstances, Cross-Institutional Credit may be applied for one or more of the last four subjects in a TIIS course. In all circumstances, Cross-Institutional Credit will be shown in the student's records as CPL.

4. Applications

A CPL application must be made in the appropriate form at, or near, the time of application for admission to a course. The CPL application should be supported by enough documentary evidence – e.g. transcripts and unit descriptions (*including learning outcomes*).

Assessment of the application will be undertaken by the Program Coordinator who will ensure that the applicant is advised in writing/email of the result. A record of any CPL (including reasons for not granting CPL) will be made available to the student and placed on the student's file.

Normally, graduate CPL will not be offered for undergrad subjects but CPL for introductory subjects may be offered for undergrad degrees in the same discipline. Also, for CPL to be offered for graduate subjects, those subjects (typically) need to be taken in Australia. Undergraduate CPL will be offered on the basis of 75% subject content coverage as per the guides of the National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition (NOOSR).

It is the intention of this *Policy and Procedures* that students should be advised of the CPL that is offered at, or near, the time they accept a place in a course.

The Program Coordinator will prepare an annual report for the Academic Board on decisions taken over the previous 12 months.

5. International Students

If the applicant is an international student applying for a study visa, the following applies:

- a. Where CPL is granted before the issue of a visa, the actual course duration in the Certificate of Enrolment (CoE) issued to the student will be reduced (NB: reductions in the actual course duration do not affect the formal course duration—e.g. a two-year course remains a two-year course).
- b. Where CPL is granted after the issue of a visa, TIIS will report the change of course duration via the Provider Registration and International Students Management System (PRISMS).

If an international student is granted CPL that significantly shortens (i.e. by one trimester or more) their course, it remains a visa condition that they continue to study full-time. Also, as noted above, TIIS must inform the (Australian) Department of Home Affairs of that significant reduction.

6. Articulation Arrangements (CPL Agreements)³

Consistent with national higher-education policy, TIIS will systematically negotiate agreements with other tertiary education providers to maximise the CPL available to eligible students for entry into TIIS courses. These agreements will provide CPL for graduates of specific courses offered by recognised providers of tertiary education for units/subjects that form part of a TIIS course.

When negotiating these agreements, TIIS will consider the comparability and equivalence of the articulating Institute's course, notably in the following aspects:

- a. Learning outcomes,
- b. Volume of learning,

³ For the purposes of Schedule 1A of the *Higher Education Support Act 2003* ([amended/revised 2018; https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2018C00312](https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2018C00312)) and the Australian Qualifications Framework 2013 (<https://www.aqf.edu.au/>) articulation agreements are known as 'Credit Transfer Arrangements'. Articulation arrangements are also colloquially known as 'pathways'.

- c. Content, and
- d. Learning and assessment approaches.

When negotiating a formal articulation arrangement, TIIS will assess the quantum of CPL that may be awarded by mapping the specified learning outcomes for the course provided by the external Institute against the learning outcomes of units within the relevant Institute course.

The existence of a CPL agreement does not preclude an individual student applying for additional CPL under this *Policy and Procedures*.

The Academic Board will approve all articulation arrangements after evidence of the mapping of the learning outcomes of the external course against the relevant Institute course has been considered.

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

TIIS will make publicly available details of all current CPL agreements in accordance with section 2.3 of the *AQF Qualifications Pathways Policy*.⁴

6.1 Internal Articulation Arrangements

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

7. Appeals

A student/applicant may appeal against a decision denying the granting of CPL. The grounds for appeal are that the decision is inconsistent with this *Policy and Procedures*. Appeals must be made in writing and lodged with the Dean within 10 working days of the student being sent written/email notification of the decision. The Dean will respond to the appeal within 20 working days and may confirm or vary the decision.

If a student remains dissatisfied with the outcome of their appeal against a decision regarding the award of CPL, they should first use the TIIS grievance-handling procedures and, if after that process concludes, they are unhappy with the outcome they can appeal via the Office of the Commonwealth Ombudsman.

8. Related Documentation

Credit for Prior Learning Application Form

9. Publication and Review

This *Policy and Procedures* will be made available to all prospective and current students on the TIIS website to enable them to make well-informed choices between alternative pathways and consider the CPL that may be available to them. Prospective students should be advised in pre-enrolment materials and upon enrolment about this *Policy and Procedures*.

This *Policy and Procedures* will be regularly reviewed to maximise applicability to new and updated awards and to student and industry needs in line with section 4.3 of the TIIS *Quality Assurance*

⁴ As set out in the Australian Qualifications Framework Handbook – January 2013.

Framework.

10. Version History

Version	Approved by	Approval Date	Details
1.0	Academic Board	25 February 2016	
2.0	Academic Board	18 April 2019	Major changes
3.0	Academic Board	7 October 2020	Major changes
3.1	Academic Board	16 February 2021	Minor Changes

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