

PL_AC_002: Credit Policy

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Responsible Officer		Head of Academic Services		
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Related Documents		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PL_AC_001: Admissions Policy Credit Application Form 		
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6.2	Academic Board	Executive Committee	8 April 2014	1 May 2014

1. Context

THINK acknowledges the value of providing opportunities for students to build upon their prior learning, whether this learning was acquired through structured courses or gained through life experience. Recognising prior learning is a key principle of the THINK's Admissions Policy which aims to ensure that all students with capacity to succeed in tertiary study have the opportunity to do so.

THINK also acknowledges that students should not have to repeat learning that has been successfully completed elsewhere. This policy is designed to maximise the credit that students can gain, to enhance student progression into and between qualifications, and to enable concurrent enrolment in more than one qualification.

2. Definitions

Credit: the value assigned for the recognition of equivalence in content and learning outcomes between different types of learning and/or qualifications. Credit reduces the amount of learning required to achieve a qualification through *credit transfer* (comparable formal learning), or *recognition of prior learning*¹ (recognition of informal and/or non-formal learning alongside any formal learning) or *articulation* (moving from one qualification to another).

- **Specified credit:** is granted towards particular or specific components of VET or HE course.
- **Unspecified credit:** is granted towards elective components of a HE course.
- **Block credit:** is granted towards whole stages or components of a HE course.

Learning outcomes: are 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.

- **Formal learning:** is the learning that takes place through a structured course of learning that leads to the full or partial achievement of an officially accredited qualification.
- **Informal learning:** is learning gained through relevant work or life experience, self-tuition and social, family, hobby or leisure activities and experiences. Unlike formal or non-formal learning, informal learning is not organized or externally structured in terms of objectives, time or learning support.
- **Non-formal learning:** refers to learning that takes place through a structured course of learning but does not lead to an officially accredited qualification, for example work-based courses and non-accredited professional development courses.

¹ RPL requires assessment of an individual's formal, non-formal and informal learning, by an appropriately qualified assessor, to determine the extent to which that individual has achieved the required learning outcomes, competency outcomes, or standards for entry to, and/or partial or total completion of a ... qualification (Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations 2011)

Summary of eligibility for credit

Credit Type:	<i>Specified credit (HE and VET)</i>	<i>Unspecified credit (HE only)</i>	<i>Block credit (HE only)</i>
Formal learning – completed qualification	✓	✓	✓
Formal learning – completed subjects	✓	✓	✗
Combination of formal learning with informal and/or non-formal learning	✓	✗	✗
Informal learning and/or non-formal learning	✓	✗	✗

3. Scope

This policy applies to students seeking credit for prior formal, informal and non-formal learning.

4. Principles

Credit decisions at THINK will:

- 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 academically defensible and take into account the student’s ability to successfully meet the learning outcomes of the qualification
- be decided in a timely way so that students’ access to qualifications is not unnecessarily inhibited
- allow for credit outcomes to be used to meet pre-requisites or other specified requirements for entry into a course leading to a qualification or for the partial fulfillment of the requirements of a qualification, and
- be formally documented (including reasons for not giving credit where applicable)

5. Credit Approval

The decision to grant credit rests with the Head of Academic Studies (or delegate). Applications for credit will be assessed to ensure that previous learning is of a comparable standard to the subjects and/or units of competency within a particular THINK course, with reference to the course and subject learning outcomes, topics covered and learning and assessment approaches.

The burden of evidence for a course credit application rests with the applicant. Evidence must reflect the student’s current levels of knowledge and skills. All evidence will be verified in accordance with the principles of validity, sufficiency and authenticity. Cited referees may be required to verify authenticity of evidence claims. In some circumstances an application for credit may also require an interview and/or demonstration.

The Head of Academic Studies (or delegate) reserves the right not to recognise part or all of any previous experience if the competencies or knowledge demonstrated and recorded are not

comparable to the subject or unit of competency's learning outcomes, current industry standards and/or Training Package requirements.

6. Types of credit

Credit may be granted as specified credit, unspecified credit or block credit.

6.1 Specified credit (HE and VET)

Specified credit is granted towards specific components of a THINK qualification on the basis of prior learning that is assessed to be comparable in terms of learning outcomes, volume of learning, content, and learning and assessment approaches.

Specified credit may be granted on the basis of:

- formal learning : completed HE subjects (whether the award is complete or not) and/or completed VET units of competency, and/or
- non-formal and/or informal learning

If specified credit is granted based on formal learning alone, the outcome on the student record will be recorded as CT: credit transfer.

If specified credit is granted based on a combination of prior learning that includes informal or non-formal learning (whether or not it also includes formal learning), the outcome on the student record will be recorded as RPL: recognition of prior learning.

When a credit application is successful, the student is exempt from completing specified subjects within a THINK course. Once applied to the academic record, either as CT or RPL, specified credit provides the student with a formal and nationally-recognised outcome for that subject and any associated units of competency.

6.2 Unspecified credit (HE only)

Unspecified credit can only be granted towards elective components of a THINK higher education course. Unspecified credit recognises that learning at the required level has been achieved and that the 'broadening education' rationale for offering electives has been met.

Unspecified credit will be granted up to the AQF level at which the prior course was taken; up to the number of units of electives available in the student's course.

Unspecified credit may be granted on the basis of:

- formal learning : completed HE subjects (whether the award is complete or not) and/or completed VET units of competency

Unspecified credit will not be granted based on informal and non-formal learning.

When a credit application is successful, the student is exempt from completing elective subjects within a THINK course. Once applied to the academic record, unspecified credit does not provide the student with an outcome for a specific subject, and will be recorded as a statement on the student record.

6.3. Block credit (HE only)

Block credit is established through:

- formal agreement of articulation pathways between THINK and external providers
- documented pathways from nationally recognised VET qualifications to THINK higher education courses (internal and external)

Block credit can only be granted where a student has completed the requirements of the entry pathway award. No block credit is available for partial completion of an award, or for informal or non-formal learning. Block credit will only be granted where the entry pathway was successfully completed within the last ten years.

The amount of block credit granted towards components of a THINK course is determined as part of the agreement and will be automatically applied at the point of entry. When developing a pathway or partnership agreement into an undergraduate course, block credit granted must still leave the student the equivalent of at least one year of full-time study in the destination course. All articulation pathways are published on the Articulation Pathway Register.

When entering a course on an articulation pathway, the student is exempt from completing specified stages or components of a THINK course. Once applied to the academic record, block credit does not provide the student with a formal and nationally-recognised outcome for specified subjects, and will be recorded as a statement on the student record.

7. Applying for specified or unspecified credit

An applicant may apply for credit before enrolling in a THINK course. Currently enrolled students may also apply for credit at any stage during their enrolment, but applications must be received by the end of week two to take effect in that study period.

Students will be advised of the outcome of their application within 10 working days of their application. If a credit application is rejected, the notification to the student will include the reasons for not awarding credit.

When applying specified credit based on formal learning alone, the following limits apply:

- No more than one-third of an undergraduate course can be exempted when applying credit from a completed Diploma qualification.
- No more than two-thirds of an undergraduate course can be exempted when applying credit from a completed Advanced Diploma or Associate Degree qualification.
- When applying credit from an undergraduate course to a THINK undergraduate course, credit granted must still leave the student at least one EFTSL to complete in the destination course
- When considering a credit application between two THINK undergraduate courses, resulting in the student's qualification in both awards, credit granted must leave the student the equivalent of at least one EFTSL to complete in each of the courses.
- No more than one-third of a postgraduate course can be exempted when applying credit transfer from a completed Graduate Certificate, Graduate Diploma or Master qualification

When applying for credit towards a THINK VET course based on informal and/or non-formal learning, no limits apply.

When applying for credit towards a THINK HE course based on informal and/or non-formal learning, THINK may grant credit (RPL) for no more than one-third of an undergraduate or postgraduate course, in addition to any credit approved for formal learning.

Credit based on formal learning (CT) will only be granted for a subject or unit of competency successfully completed within the last ten years of the credit application.

Credit will only be granted for full subjects and/or units of competency.

If a student has had credit approved whilst enrolled in one course and then transfers to a different course, the credit will not automatically be transferred; however, the student can apply to have the credit recognised under the new course enrolment.

The availability of credit does not guarantee admission to any THINK courses. Students must still meet the entry requirements for admission and follow the procedures of the Admissions Policy.

7.1 Evidence required for credit based on formal learning

THINK accepts the following forms of evidence to support an application for credit based on formal learning:

- AQF qualification testamur issued by an accredited institution
- formal academic transcript issued by an accredited institution
- statement of attainment issued by an accredited institution
- overseas qualification issued by an institution listed in the AEI NOOSR Country Education Profiles
- syllabus copy detailing the learning outcomes and assessments of the subject(s) undertaken

All supporting documents must be in English and be certified copies, unless THINK sights the original.

7.2 Evidence required for credit based on informal and/or non-formal learning

THINK accepts the following forms of evidence to support an application for credit based on informal and/or non-formal learning:

- letters from employers / references (on business letterhead)
- curriculum vitae
- corroborating evidence
- work documents/job statement and evidence of process
- portfolios containing samples of work
- interviews
- presentations
- challenge exam
- performance review evidence
- practical demonstrations
- non-award professional development courses
- other non-AQF awards and certificates



- recognition of merit
- industry awards
- other documentation or evidence deemed relevant by the assessor

8. Appeals

Students can appeal a decision not to grant credit by following the Grievance Procedures of the *Complaints and Grievance Policy and Procedure (Academic and Non-Academic)*.

9. References

- Standard 12.1 - National Code of Practice for Registration Authorities and Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students (National Code 2007), established under the Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act 2000.
- AQF Qualifications Pathways Policy