Pathways, Credit Transfer and RPL Fact Sheet

What are Pathways?

If you’re not successful in getting into your most preferred course, there are other options you can take to increase your chances of being accepted, or to progress into your desired course. These options are called pathways.

Pathway programs are a way into your course through alternate means. Just because you haven’t been accepted into your first choice course, this doesn’t mean that you should give up on your dream.

A common way that institutions structure pathways is to offer nested programs that allow you to progress through different qualifications levels without having to repeat studies. For example, you may complete a Certificate II, III or IV and then enrol in the Diploma in the same field with credit applied for the studies already completed.

Depending on their policies, institutions may require you to apply for the lowest qualification first and progress to the next level when it is complete, or enrol in the highest level qualification and then exit when the desired qualification level has been completed.

Every institution is different and offers different credit for different courses. Some institutions offer higher credit programs for studies within their institution – that is, you may receive more credit if you complete the Diploma at the same institution that you then apply to for a Bachelor Degree.

The only place that you can find out what credit is available is through the institution itself. Many institutions have a dedicated webpage where they explain their pathways.

An example of a Pathway may be as follows:

- Certificate III e.g. six months duration
- Diploma or Advanced Diploma e.g. one year duration
- Bachelor Degree e.g. two year duration

This pathway is an example of a Certificate course, which articulates into a Diploma, and then articulates into a Bachelor degree. In this case, you would receive one year of credit for a three year Bachelor degree. Based on full-time study, going through this pathway would only take six months longer than the original degree. When it gives you the opportunity of doing something you really love, this can be a good alternative while exposing you to different styles of learning.

Each institution lists information on their pathways programs on the VTAC website www.vtac.edu.au/courses-inst/pathways.html

Credit Transfer

Credit transfer is when an institution recognises any previous education or training you have completed in a similar field or topic and allows you to use it to count towards the completion of your current education or training.

Credit transfer may reduce the number of subjects you have to do to get the qualification, and can be a pathway. Generally you will need to provide statements of academic achievement to support your credit transfer request.

There are national credit transfer guidelines, set by Universities Australia, which state that holders of a Diploma or an Advanced Diploma are eligible for a certain amount of credit.

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Three year degree</th>
<th>Four year degree</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Diploma</td>
<td>Up to 33% credit</td>
<td>Up to 25% credit</td>
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<tr>
<td>Advanced Diploma</td>
<td>Up to 50% credit</td>
<td>Up to 37.5% credit</td>
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The Australian Qualifications Framework takes into consideration the equivalence of learning outcomes, volume of learning, program of study (including content) and learning and assessment processes.

If you’re applying for credit transfer when you enrol, take in your transcripts from previous study to the institution.

If you’re applying for credit transfer after you have already enrolled, most institutions have an online form that you can download and complete to be submitted with transcripts of your results (which may need to be certified).


For a list of the participating institutions, fields of study and policy guidelines, see the Policies/Programs section of the Universities Australia website: www.universitiesaustralia.edu.au
Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is when an institution formally assesses skills or knowledge you have within the area you are studying.

RPL means that you’re not repeating coursework that you’ve learnt elsewhere, but that you will be learning new and challenging topics.

RPL may shorten the qualification length, and formally recognise that you have completed parts of the training in a different format.

RPL takes into consideration any of the following that are relevant to your qualification:

- Previous training (non-accredited training, such as a short course)
- Volunteering
- Community activities
- Work experience
- Family or carer duties
- Attending or participating in seminars, conferences, workshops
- Life experiences that have given you competencies that match the courses you’re applying for.

Each institution’s approach to RPL is slightly different and it is best to check their RPL policy, which is often easily accessible on their website.

Institutions list their Credit Transfer and RPL statements on the VTAC website. Visit http://www.vtac.edu.au/courses-inst/credit-transfer.html

Glossary

Articulation
An arrangement that allows you to transition through a VET (Vocational Education and Training) qualification into another VET or higher education program.

Australian Qualifications Framework
Framework that defines all Australian qualifications nationally in post-compulsory education and training.

Credit Transfer
An administrative process to formally recognise your competency in courses that you have been awarded at another TAFE institute or Registered Training Organisation (RTO).

Pathways
A way of getting into the qualification you want, that provides different entry and exit points, it can include the linking of existing qualifications such as using your TAFE or training qualification as a pathway to higher education at university.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)
An assessment process which may give you entry, or credit for TAFE courses, based on skills or knowledge you have gained through a non-accredited training facility.

Registered Training Organisation (RTO)
A training provider registered by a state or territory government, which provides and assesses nationally recognised qualifications. RTOs may include TAFEs, schools, companies, industry associations and community organisations.