

## Credit Recognition

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Major changes/additions since the last version was approved are indicated by a vertical line in the left-hand margin.

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Purpose

This policy provides a framework and a set of principles for recognising, determining and awarding credit for relevant learning gained prior to enrolment in a course or programme at Ara Institute of Canterbury Ltd<sup>1</sup>.

## 1.2 Scope and Application

- a Learners in programmes covered by the Ara academic regulations may apply for credit recognition either from study completed here, at another recognised institution, or by submitting evidence of having achieved similar learning through experience.
- b Ara has no imposed limit on the number of credits that can be earned via credit recognition, however, credit is granted only where there is a close, verified match between the previous learning achieved and the stated learning outcomes or graduate profile.
- c This policy applies to all assessed courses and programmes covered by the Ara academic regulations or for which Ara has been given such authority by another body.
- d This policy relates to the NZQA definitions of Credit Recognition and Transfer (CRT) and Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL).

## 1.3 Formal Delegations

- a The Ara Academic Committee Terms of Reference are updated on a regular basis and submitted to Board for ratification. The current terms of reference include the following responsibilities most relevant to this policy:
  - i Setting academic standards, including assessment policies and procedures.
  - ii Overseeing the establishment of programme regulations (e.g. suspension of learners, withdrawal, appeals, admission, special admissions, entry, awarding of qualifications, credit recognition) and regulations for release of final marks.

<sup>1</sup> From herein referred to as Ara

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- b Refer to Section 3 of this policy for details related to specific responsibilities and delegations.

<p><b>Related Ara Procedures and Forms</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• APP507a Application for Credit Recognition</li> </ul>	<p><b>Related Ara Policies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• APP505 Assessment</li> <li>• APP508 Moderation</li> </ul>
<p><b>Related Legislation or Other Documentation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NZQA 'Supporting Learning Pathways: Credit Recognition and Transfer Policy' (2002)</li> <li>• NZQA 'Credit Transfer &amp; Recognition of Prior Learning' May 2015 Update</li> <li>• 'Strategic Review of Pathways and Staircasing' working paper, TEC May 2006</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Notes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ara was one of three institutions involved in setting national standards for RPL in 1991 – 1993. The Academic Board established a RPL Working Party and produced its first policy statement on RPL in 1993. In 1994 it sponsored a pilot study to investigate the implications of RPL and adopted 15 recommendations, including the appointment of an RPL Coordinator (disestablished in 1999).</li> <li>• In 2002, Ara set up the Centre for Assessment of Prior Learning (CAPL). The CAPL Reference Group reported to the Academic Board via the Academic Procedures Committee.</li> <li>• The 2006 version of this policy took into account definitions and processes used by our TANZ partners, as well as NZQA papers 'Supporting Learning Pathways: Credit Recognition and Transfer' (December 2002). NZQA noted that the terminology used in those papers is not consistent across sectors. The underlying philosophy and recommendations, however, are consistent with practices at Ara.</li> <li>• The 2009 version was amended to include credit recognition via "Advanced Standing".</li> <li>• 2016 – new branding</li> <li>• 2017 amendments provide clarity on RPL, APL and ADV, and also removes sections no longer required. Removal of section Variation to an Award – this is now in <i>APP503 Naming and Awarding Qualifications and Recognising Achievement</i>.</li> <li>• 2017: Minor addition regarding the Centre of Assessment for Prior Learning (CAPL) Terms and Conditions of Enrolment. (Section 3.5b).</li> <li>• 2018: Restructure of Te Kāhui Manukura.</li> <li>• 2020: NZIST changes – Academic Board becomes Ara Academic Committee; Ara Council becomes Ara Board. Changing 'student' to 'learner'.</li> </ul>	

## 1.4 Definitions

- a **Credit recognition:** Over-arching term for the process of awarding credit for a learner's previous learning towards their chosen target qualification. This may occur on a case-by-case basis or as a structured agreement between providers.

The five categories of credit recognition are credit transfer (CT), cross credit (CC), recognition of prior learning (RPL), assessment of prior experiential learning (APL), and advanced standing (ADV). Credit recognition provisions must be detailed in each programme approval document. Refer to the definitions below and relevant details in Section 3 of this policy.

- i CT: Credit awarded for having successfully completed the identical course or standard at Ara or another equivalent institution.
- ii CC: Credit awarded for having successfully completed an equivalent course or standard at Ara or another accredited institution.
- iii RPL: Credit awarded after evaluation of assembled evidence of the learner's relevant skills and knowledge related to all or part of a course, programme or standard for which credit recognition is sought. This evidence can be from employment or other experience, or from informal and non-formal study.
- iv APL: Similar to RPL with an assessment of learning carried out by challenge test, professional conversations, or panel presentation, along with a presented portfolio of evidence.

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- v **ADV:** Candidate entry into a programme at an advanced level. Advanced standing is awarded when it is evident that a learner can enter a programme at an advanced level following an assessment of prior learning, qualification equivalence or current competency.
- d **Assessment against a profile:** The holistic assessment of a candidate against a profile within a qualification – either against the graduate profile or the profile outlined for a specific year or specific area.
- e **CAPL:** Centre for Assessment of Prior Learning. CAPL provides assessment and formal recognition of learning gained through work or other experiences. It is internationally recognised that learning in this way can translate into formal academic qualifications.
- f **Standard cross credit:** Cross credit arrangements that have already been approved and published on the Cross-Credit Schedule in the Student Management System (SMS) for a particular course.
- g **Current competency:** An assessment or interview that may be required before any credit recognition is awarded. This is to ensure the learner's previously achieved learning is still current in the relevant learning areas.

## 2 Principles

Ara is committed to the recognition of prior learning and recognises that learning may be general or specific and may be achieved in a variety of ways. The principles are that credit recognition should:

- a Eliminate duplication of learning and assessment.
- b Provide open, inclusive, and integrated tertiary education systems, enabling learners to transfer between institutions, both national and internationally.
- c Ensure the quality, integrity and standing of qualifications are not diminished.

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### 3 Associated Procedures for Ara Academic Policy on Credit Recognition

Contents:	3.1	Credit Recognition: General Provisions
	3.2	Credit Transfer: Specific Provisions
	3.3	Cross Credit: Specific Provisions
	3.4	Recognition of Prior Learning: Specific Provisions
	3.5	Assessment of Prior Learning: Specific Provisions
	3.6	Advanced Standing: Specific Provisions

#### 3.1 Credit Recognition (General Provisions)

- a Application for credit recognition may include courses completed at Ara, another equivalent institution in New Zealand or overseas, or learning achieved by other means.
- b Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) applications for a significant amount of credit, usually more than a third of the qualification, are handled by the Centre for Assessment of Prior Learning (CAPL), according to the approved procedures published by the Centre.
- c Credit via the Ara credit recognition provisions can be awarded for full qualifications, for courses or modules within a qualification and for specific standards. In line with the rationale for the Centre for Assessment of Prior Learning (CAPL), the underlying philosophy of learning and the institution's commitment to acknowledging previous achievement, Ara does not specify a maximum percentage of the total credit value of a qualification that can be awarded via credit recognition. However, some national and consortium developed qualifications may impose their own credit limits.
- d Information about credit recognition, the process for applying for it, the prescribed application fee and likely additional fees if further assessment is required, is available to learners from the Ara website and from CAPL or individual departments. An overview of credit recognition and articulation is required as part of programme approval and is therefore subject to scrutiny by the Portfolio Assurance and Academic Risk Committee on behalf of the Ara Academic Committee.
- e An annual schedule of standard charges is approved by the DCE - Chief Operating Officer (COO) on the recommendation from the Registry Manager. This includes fees related to credit recognition. The annual schedule of charges is published on the Ara website.
- f Credit recognition is awarded only to enrolled Ara learners and CAPL clients. Applications may be made on the standard *APP507a Application for Credit Recognition* form. The department responsible for the delivery of the learning area has the authority to approve the credit recognition. In the case of 'service delivery' such as communications, mathematics or Māori language, the department delivering the course normally oversees credit recognition applications, not the department responsible for the target qualification itself.
- g Partial credit for a specified course can be awarded at the discretion of the relevant Department, but it must be made clear to the learner in writing what additional work is required to obtain full credit and what the 'pro rata' course fee would be. In most cases, partial credit is an option only when the learning in the course equates to a 'natural' split. Applications for partial credit must be endorsed by the Head of Department or specified delegate.
- h Each learner is responsible for providing sufficient, verified documentary evidence of previous learning so that a decision about appropriate credit recognition can be made. If learning was completed outside Ara an original transcript or other formal evidence

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must be sighted and attached (or a summary of evidence attached) to the credit recognition application.

- i The Department or CAPL is responsible for determining the following and informing the learner of the outcome:
  - i What charge will be levied for consideration of the credit recognition application.
  - ii Whether any further evidence is required before credit is awarded.
  - iii Whether there is an additional charge to cover any further assessment.
  - iv Whether any credit is to be awarded following the assessment process.
- i The learner's formal academic transcript includes a record of all credit achieved, regardless of the process used to validate that credit. A grade of 'P' (ungraded pass) can be awarded for all RPL and APL credit unless specified in the programme regulations. Cross credits may use a grade of 'CC' and Credit transfers may use a grade of 'CT'.
- j Reconsiderations and appeals against credit recognition decisions are handled according to the processes governing any other assessment decision (refer *APP505 Assessment*).
- k Situations not covered by this policy are referred to the Ara Academic Committee. The Ara Academic Committee has the power to vary the procedures set out in this policy if it is deemed appropriate to do so.

### **3.2 Credit Transfer (Specific Provisions)**

- a The learner applying for credit transfer must provide the original or verified copy of the result notice for each completed course if the course was not completed at Ara or if the course is not shown on their NZQA Record of Learning.
- b Ara does not charge for credit transfer.

### **3.3 Cross Credit (Specific Provisions)**

- a If cross credit for the particular or equivalent course has not been awarded in the target qualification before, the Department requires sufficient information about that course in order to determine the following:
  - i Equivalency of course level, credit value and content (usually at least 80% equivalence) is required to award cross credit.
  - ii Current relevance to the target qualification, especially in areas of changing technology or standards.
  - iii Ratio of theory to practical work (if relevant) and amount of independent learning required of the learner.
- b If the cross credit is from a course completed at Ara, no further documentation is required and there is no charge for 'standard cross credit'.

### **3.4 Recognition of Prior Learning (Specific Provisions)**

- a The NZQA states that "credit should be awarded for current and relevant skills, knowledge, attitudes and values achieved, without regard for the length, place or method of learning (e.g. workplace, life experience, hobbies, self-directed study)". Ara endorses this stance and therefore acknowledges such learning as part of the credit recognition provisions.

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- b As with cross credit and credit transfer, successful RPL applications result in credit being awarded for previous learning, not merely an exemption with alternative courses required (i.e. the learner is not required to enrol in that course of the target qualification nor substitute any further course to meet the overall requirements).
- c RPL applications for a significant amount of credit, usually more than a third of the qualification, are handled by the Centre for Assessment of Prior Learning (CAPL), according to the approved procedures published by the Centre.
- d Departments must maintain full records of the assessments undertaken to verify credit via RPL. This also includes records of appropriate moderation, as for any assessment activity.

Ara must:

  - i be accredited for the scope of the assessment undertaken, and
  - ii adhere to moderation plans and procedures. (Refer *APP508 Moderation*.)
- e The Tertiary Education Commission currently stipulates that EFTS cannot be claimed for RPL assessment. Applicants must therefore pay a fee that covers staff time (and in the case of CAPL applications, overheads and operating costs as well). The fee is based on the Department's estimate of the time a particular type of assessment is likely to take (e.g. challenge test, portfolio, attestation or combination), as well as the breadth of the application (e.g. entire qualification, one course or standard, a set of courses or standards). A standard charge per 'nominal hour' is set annually, including a non-refundable application fee. It is acknowledged that some applications will require less than the estimated time, and some will require more time - but the fee based on the estimated nominal hours is charged regardless. This is so learners can be informed of the cost before lodging the full application. Note that the total fee charged cannot exceed that which the learner would pay if enrolled in the relevant course/s.
- f If a current Ara staff member applies for credit via RPL, the assessment undertaken must include either input from a qualified person external to Ara or full moderation before credit is confirmed. In some cases, assessment or moderation by an Ara staff member external to the particular Department is acceptable. This must be endorsed by the DCE – AIR or delegate prior to the assessment being undertaken.

### **3.5 Assessment of Prior Learning (Specific Provisions)**

- a APL can be carried out for a single course, a group of courses, a specified profile, or the graduate profile. All individual course learning outcomes do not need to be evidenced; however, the candidate must show equivalent integrated learning in areas that map to the profile at the same level and the same breadth.
- b For specific terms and conditions of enrolment for learners wishing to gain a qualification through this process, please refer to section 9 of *APP504d Terms and Conditions of Enrolment*.

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### **3.6 Advanced Standing (Specific Provisions)**

- a As a result of being awarded credit recognition, an applicant may be given advanced standing into a programme. Advanced standing may be awarded against individual courses, group of courses, or a qualification profile (e.g., graduate profile, year 2 profile).
- b Advanced standing provision must be detailed in each programme approval document.
- c Advanced standing credit can be awarded for individual courses, or for blocks of credit. Blocks of credit are determined by the level of the learning, level of the profile and programme structure. All blocks of credit must be approved by CAPL and be in accordance with their approved procedure.

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