



CREDIT AND RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING AT AGE

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Introduction

Credit and Recognition of Prior Learning is an important issue for AGE. What has evolved (by way of continuous improvement/self-assurance) is an appropriate and informed approach that is transparent and benchmarked. **Credit** is a recognition of equivalence in content and learning outcomes between different types of learning and/or qualifications. Credit can reduce the amount of learning required to achieve a qualification. Credit may be granted through credit transfer, articulation, RPL or advanced standing. **Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)** is an assessment of an individual's prior learning to determine whether credit will be granted. RPL includes formal, informal, and non-formal learning.

This paper will discuss the approach that AGE has in place in the context of the *Threshold Standards (2021)*; the *TEQSA Guidance Note (October 2017)*; the *Australian Qualifications Framework - acknowledging the Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000*.

Standard	Key Considerations
1.1	Prior to enrolment, providers must inform students of policies, arrangements, and potential eligibility for credit for prior learning.
1.2, 1.3.6, 1.5.7b, 1.5.8, and 6.2.1h	Any granting of credit through RPL should: not potentially disadvantage students including in the student's transition into and through their course; and maintain integrity of the course and qualification. Providers should grant credit and qualifications in accordance with its organisational policies and the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF). Where credit is granted, it must be identified on a student's record of results and in an Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement (AHEGS) if one is issued.
1.4 and 1.5.3	On completion of a course, students must demonstrate they have achieved the specified learning outcomes for that course. Learning outcomes for a qualification must be consistent with the AQF Specification for the qualification level.
2.4	Providers must have mechanisms for resolving grievances about any aspect of a student's experience with a higher education provider.
3.1	Providers must ensure grants of credit will still result in the student having - engaged in advanced learning consistent with the study involved; and achieved required learning outcomes.
5.3	Providers must monitor cohort data on student progress (and attrition) to continuously improve and address risk.
6.2.1 f	Providers must ensure competent academic governance and leadership of higher education provision to maintain the quality of higher education offered.
6.3	A provider's academic governance ensures the integrity and quality of the higher education activities of teaching, learning, research, and scholarship.
7.1.3	When offering units separate to a course of study that may entitle a student to credits toward a course or qualification the provider must explain - which course/qualification it will contribute to; and the terms on which credit will be granted or recognised.
7.2.2 a and d; and 7.3.2	Providers must provide public access to their policies and arrangements for RPL and granting credit, including standing credit transfer arrangements.

An initial independent review was commissioned (October 2024) to consider each of the elements.

Overview of the Framework

Using a framework reflecting TEQSA¹ guidelines, the following table provides an independent audit of coverage of the **key considerations** of best practice relating to **Credit and Recognition of Prior Learning** and how in turn AGE performs accordingly –

Focus	Identifier	Evidence	Rating
1	Information being provided to students about how to apply for credit, or their eligibility for credit with a provider, which can impact on a student's decision making when comparing providers	AGE has in place a comprehensive and benchmarked policy and procedure that is readily accessible.	✓
2	Timeliness in notifying students about whether credit will be granted, as well as a providers reasoning if it is not granted, can lead to a poor student experience	AGE is committed to a timely and informed process.	✓
3	Quality record keeping of the reasons for refusing to grant credit to students, or granting credit, particularly when doing so departs from the provider's policies. e.g., recording that credit was granted to a student only because they completed a unit with the same title at another institution	Record keeping is appropriate. There is little, if any, deviance from the existing policy.	✓
4	Quality records, about courses of study or individual units of study, enabling students to have their studies recognised through RPL at other providers. This also makes it easier for providers to review and improve their own RPL policies and procedures	Records are appropriate. Course and unit information is readily available.	✓
5	Evidence-based approaches are used in granting credit with the policies are appropriately written or applied. The granting of credit must not disadvantage the students	The AGE approach is evidence based. Every effort is made to ensure students are not disadvantaged.	✓
6	Policies should have clarity about who has appropriate expertise to make informed decisions about granting credit, or delegating decisions on granting credit to employees with the specialist knowledge that does not disadvantage students	The AGE policy and procedure has the necessary clarity about decision making/delegation ensuring no disadvantage to students.	✓
7	Granting credit where the available information suggests learning outcomes are achieved or sufficient. Providers should have consideration of factors such as length of course and intensity of the learning when determining the amount of credit to award	All key issues are considered the process – with evident focus on the course learning outcomes and graduate attributes.	✓

¹ TEQSA Guidance Note: Credit and Recognition of Prior Learning (July 2023)

Credit and Recognition of Prior Learning at AGE

8	When making changes to course design, appropriately planning for and managing potential impacts on students who have been granted credit through RPL	If changes occur, the impact is ascertained and managed appropriately.	✓
9	Adequately monitoring and reviewing RPL procedures and policies in granting credit. This includes monitoring cohorts of students granted credit to identify if they are succeeding in their courses of study; and recognising and addressing problems with current credit or RPL procedures resulting in high attrition or failure rates.	The AGE RPL policy and procedures is monitored and reviewed appropriately. Student cohorts are monitoring carefully to ensure progression.	✓

We consider each in turn –

1.

Information being provided to students about how to apply for credit, or their eligibility for credit with a provider, which can impact on a student's decision making when comparing providers

AGE has in place a comprehensive and benchmarked policy and procedure that is readily accessible. This can be viewed at – [87330e_9f158253cd7d41f1ba51058db4534d6b.pdf](https://www.guildmusic.edu.au/87330e_9f158253cd7d41f1ba51058db4534d6b.pdf)

The policy is located on the public website providing the necessary access and consideration – behind About Us/Policies and Forms – [Policies & Procedures | Guild Music Copy](#)



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'This policy and procedure outlines how the Australian Guild of Education ("AGE") will recognise studies completed at other institutions (credit transfer) and learning from work and/or life experience (recognition of prior learning).' 1.2, p1

Appropriate detail on how to apply is evident in the policy –

'Students must submit a formal application using the online Credit Application Form and must provide supporting documentation including certified transcript(s) to substantiate that they have completed studies cognate to the unit(s) for which credit is sought.' 5.1, p4

The application form is readily accessible at - [87330e_6e7950ff47f14644bd90f01b598fd1e1.pdf](https://www.guildmusic.edu.au/87330e_6e7950ff47f14644bd90f01b598fd1e1.pdf)

'All credit applications must be submitted during the process of applying to study at AGE, and not after commencement of studies. If a document that is required for the application is not available at the time of application for admission to the course, students may apply within the first two (2) weeks of commencing studies. Applications made after the first two (2) weeks will be automatically rejected.' 5.2, p4

The process is time sensitive – ensuring speedy resolution preferably prior to enrolment but certainly within the first two weeks of the commencing study period.

'Failure to provide all the required documents with the application will result in the applications being delayed or rejected. Students may reapply if it is within the stipulated timeframe noting that there are no extensions to the timeframe.' 5.3, p4

Related documents include –

Credit Application Form – [87330e_6e7950ff47f14644bd90f01b598fd1e1.pdf](https://www.guildmusic.edu.au/87330e_6e7950ff47f14644bd90f01b598fd1e1.pdf) ([guildmusic.edu.au](https://www.guildmusic.edu.au))

Admissions Policies and Procedures - [Admissions Policy - Domestic & Online Students - with David & Laura updates](#) and [Admissions Policy - International and Offshore Students](#)

Student Grievance Handling Policy and Procedure - [87330e_368148bf3e814f3bb14d392b01c66a7e.pdf](https://www.guildmusic.edu.au/87330e_368148bf3e814f3bb14d392b01c66a7e.pdf)

2.

Timeliness in notifying students about whether credit will be granted, as well as a providers reasoning if it is not granted, can lead to a poor student experience

AGE is committed to a *timely and informed process*.

The Credit/RPL process is ideally completed prior to commencement – but certainly within the first two weeks of the commencing study period.

Upon approval –

A written record of the decision is lodged and stored

Notification of the reduced course duration if appropriate (5.4, a and b)

Students have the right of appeal –

'Any student who wishes to lodge an appeal because of an unsuccessful application for credit should follow the procedure set out in AGE's *Grievance Handling Policy and Procedure*.' 5.5, p5

The *Student Grievance Handling Policy and Procedure* is readily accessible on the public website at - [87330e 368148bf3e814f3bb14d392b01c66a7e.pdf](#)

Every attempt is made to ensure the *Credit/RPL process is a good experience* – managed in a timely way – and fair and supportive of the student. An advantage of a small organisation is that such matters can be managed in detail and on a one-to-one basis.

3.

Quality record keeping of the reasons for refusing to grant credit to students, or granting credit, particularly when doing so departs from the provider's policies. e.g., recording that credit was granted to a student only because they completed a unit with the same title at another institution

Record keeping is appropriate.

'A report on the success of credit granted will be part of the annual course monitoring.' 5.6, p5

'Records of acceptance of credit will be retained for at least two (2) years after an international student cease to be an accepted student.' 5.7, p5

There is little, if any, *deviance* from the existing policy.

'AGE is committed to maintaining the integrity of its academic courses in alignment with the AQF and grants credit accordingly. *Credit* is to be awarded on the basis of completed formal academic studies that an authorised institution has assessed and certified (i.e. units of learning that are "quality assured" against known standards). *Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)* is based on "prior experiential learning", that is, "a process through which learning is achieved outside formal education or training".' 3.1, p2

'All decisions should be informed by careful professional judgment that is transparent and fair.' 3.3, p2

'Only evidence of formal and informal learning completed in the previous five (5) years will be considered unless approval is given based on evidence of subsequent development and life or work experience in the discipline.' 3.7, p3

The criteria for granting Credit/RPL is comprehensive and appropriate –

Limits to Credit

Undergraduate –

'Up to 50% credit (18 months equivalent) in an AGE 3-year bachelor's degree for an Advanced Diploma or Associate-Degree from another institution' 3.5a, p2 OR

'Up to 33% credit (1 year equivalent) in a 3-year AGE bachelor's degree for a Diploma from another institution.' 3.5b, p2

Postgraduate –

'Up to 50% credit in the AGE award for a Degree at AQF Level 8 or above from another institution.' 3.6a, p2

Credit and Recognition of Prior Learning at AGE

Determination of credit

'Credit is determined through equivalence of the-

- a. learning outcomes
- b. volume of learning
- c. program of study, including content
- d. learning and assessment approaches.' 3.8, p3

Determination of RPL

'In determining the applicability of RPL, AGE will assess whether students have met the unit learning outcomes or standards or competencies prescribed for a unit. This may require that assessment evidence include, but not necessarily be limited to, methods such as:

- a. relevant professional training
- b. project work
- c. practice related learning
- d. independent research
- e. a piece of scholarship
- f. a portfolio with examples of previous work
- g. letters from employers or community leaders explaining the applicant's experience, responsibilities, skills and capacities
- h. work-based assessment
- i. examinations
- j. interviews
- k. demonstrations
- l. Ofqual or equivalent
- m. a combination of some or all of these methods.' 3.11, p

4.

Quality records, about courses of study or individual units of study, enabling students to have their studies recognised through RPL at other providers. This also makes it easier for providers to review and improve their own RPL policies and procedures

Records are appropriate. Course and unit information is readily available on the public website –

Course information - [Study with Us | Australian Guild of Music Education \(guildmusic.edu.au\)](https://www.guildmusic.edu.au/study-with-us)

Key course information - [Key Course Information | Guild Music Copy](#)

Course structure - <https://www.guildmusic.edu.au/blank-1>

Entry Requirements - [Entry Requirements | Guild Music Copy](#)

International Student Handbook - [87330e_f9c3394b91d24899b907e15dba11a461.pdf](#)

Course Brochure - [87330e_0a064bcae67d4ba7b758a70e591dcf44.pdf \(guildmusic.edu.au\)](#)

Continuous improvement and self-assurance are key aspects of the AGE mindset. The current Credit and Recognition of Prior Learning policy and procedure was refreshed in March 2024.

Approval Review	Details
Governing authority	Academic Board
Responsible officer	Academic Director
Endorsed by	Board of Directors
Date of approval	7 March 2024
Date of effect	1 April 2024
Updated	N.A.
Review date	1 April 2027
Version	V1 Est 2024

Student Feedback is encouraged –

‘AGE staff and students may provide feedback about this document by emailing support@guildmusic.edu.au for such feedback to be incorporated into a future review.’ 7.1, p6

5.

Evidence-based approaches are used in granting credit with the policies are appropriately written or applied. The granting of credit must not disadvantage the students

The AGE approach is *evidence based*.

'AGE is committed to maintaining the integrity of its academic courses in alignment with the AQF and grants credit accordingly. Credit is to be awarded on the basis of completed formal academic studies that an authorised institution has assessed and certified (i.e. units of learning that are "quality assured" against known standards). Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is based on "prior experiential learning", that is, "a process through which learning is achieved outside formal education or training".' 3.1, p2

'All decisions should be informed by careful professional judgment that is transparent and fair.' 3.3, p2

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'In **determining the applicability of RPL**, AGE will assess whether students have met the unit learning outcomes or standards or competencies prescribed for a unit. This may require that assessment evidence include, but not necessarily be limited to, methods such as -

- a. relevant professional training
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- m. a combination of some or all of these methods.' 3.11, p3

Every effort is made to ensure students are not disadvantaged.

6.

Policies should have clarity about who has appropriate expertise to make informed decisions about granting credit, or delegating decisions on granting credit to employees with the specialist knowledge that does not disadvantage students

The AGE policy and procedure has the necessary clarity about *decision making/delegation* ensuring no disadvantage to students.

'The **Academic Director** has responsibility to:

- a. approve articulation agreements
- b. approve studies undertaken more than eight (8) years previous as the basis for credit due to subsequent work or life experience
- c. approve all decisions for credit in consultation with the relevant Discipline Heads
- d. report on the success of credit granted in the annual course monitoring.' 4.1, pp3-4

'**Discipline Heads** have the responsibility to:

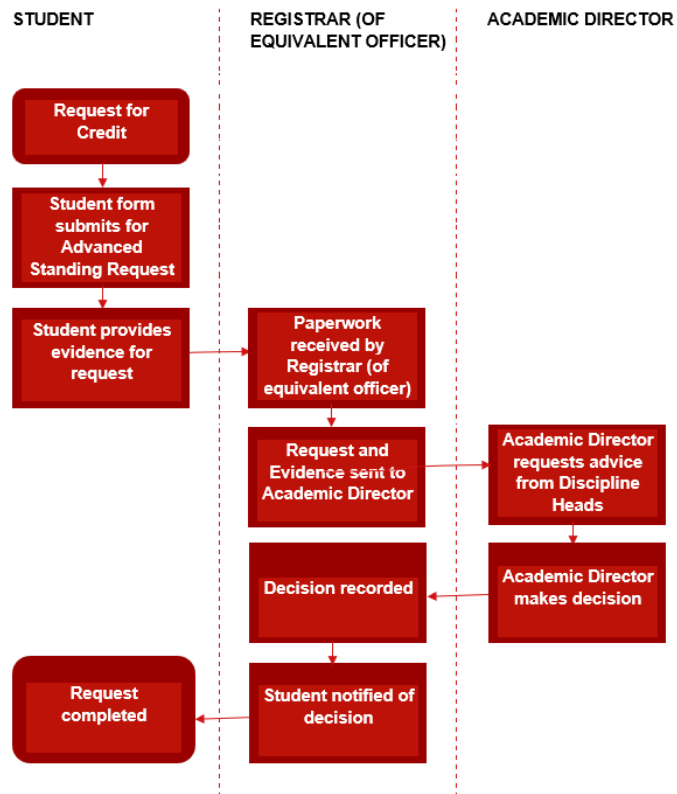
- a. identify those units that do not attract credit transfer via the evidence tables
- b. recommend credit to the Academic Director.' 4.2, p4

'The **Registrar** (of equivalent officer) has a responsibility to:

- a. publish the evidence tables
- b. record all decision regarding credit
- c. ensure all decisions are conveyed to the applicant in a timely manner
- d. keep records of acceptance as required.'

A useful workflow regarding application/approval is embed in the current policy and procedure (9, p7 –

Appendix A: Application and Approval Workflow



7.

Granting credit where the available information suggests learning outcomes are achieved or sufficient. Providers should have consideration of factors such as length of course and intensity of the learning when determining the amount of credit to award

All key issues are considered in the process – with evident focus on the course *learning outcomes* and *graduate attributes*.

The course **learning outcomes** are readily accessible on the AGE public website - [Key Course Information | Guild Music Copy](#)

CL01	A broad knowledge of the applied, theoretical and historical basis of the discipline
CL02	A depth of disciplinary knowledge in a professionally applicable specialisation
CL03	An understanding of the processes of musical scholarship and research
CL04	The ability to work both independently and collaboratively in diverse and complex musical settings
CL05	Effective written, verbal and interpersonal communication skills
CL06	Critical thinking and analytical skills appropriate to a range of contexts including further study
CL07	The ability to apply specific musical skills to a wide range of professional contexts
CL08	The capacity to apply technological and creative solutions to contemporary musical practices
CL08	The capacity to apply technological and creative solutions to contemporary musical practices
CL09	The ability to incorporate and apply knowledge from business practice and legislation to a portfolio career in the music profession.

These are consistent with the AQF - [The Australian Qualifications Framework | AQF](#)

The **graduate attributes** are readily accessible on the AGE public website - [Key Course Information | Guild Music Copy](#) –

GA1	Deep disciplinary knowledge
GA2	The ability to apply knowledge and skills in innovative ways
GA3	A commitment to lifelong learning
GA4	Effective communication skills for diverse contexts
GA5	The capacity to work independently and collaboratively
GA6	Demonstrate critical thinking, problem solving and decision-making abilities essential to contributing soundly to the resolution of issues confronting organisations
GA7	Facilitate intellectual curiosity
GA8	Act in an ethical manner in all aspects of professional life.

Credit and Recognition of Prior Learning at AGE

'Credit is recognition of achieving a portion of the required knowledge, skills and understanding of units in a course of study, *expressed as an equivalent unit* and is given an 'AS' grade on the student's academic transcript.' 3.2, p2

'In determining the applicability of RPL, AGE will assess whether students have met the unit *learning outcomes* or standards or competencies prescribed for a unit.' 3.11, p3

8.

When making changes to course design, appropriately planning for and managing potential impacts on students who have been granted credit through RPL

If changes occur, the impact is ascertained and managed appropriately.

The Academic Director oversees the process as/if required.

9.

Adequately monitoring and reviewing RPL procedures and policies in granting credit. This includes monitoring cohorts of students granted credit to identify if they are succeeding in their courses of study; and recognising and addressing problems with current credit or RPL procedures resulting in high attrition or failure rates

The AGE RPL policy and procedures is *monitored and reviewed* appropriately. Student cohorts are monitoring carefully to ensure progression.

Monitoring of the policies and procedures is an important aspect of the self-assurance and continuous improvement commitment at AGE.

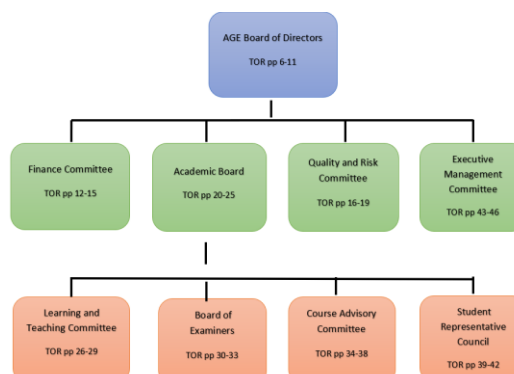
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All Policies and procedures are monitored and reviewed systematically with the assistance of a robust standing committee system in place –



About the Authors

Emeritus Professor Greg Whateley is Chief Executive and Executive Dean AGE

Professor Elizabeth Woollacott is Registrar and Head of Performance and Arts Management at AGE

Acknowledgements

The Academy of Music and Performing Arts - [AMPA - Academy of Music and Performing Arts - AMPA | Academy of Music and Performing Arts](#)

Institute of Creative Arts and Technology - [Institute of Creative Arts and Technologies Courses Sydney & Melbourne \(icat.edu.au\)](#)

Universal Business School Sydney - [UBSS Australia](#)

Australian Institute of Music - [The Australian Institute of Music \(aim.edu.au\)](#)

Also see –

TEQSA (2023) – Guidance Note: Credit and recognition of prior learning (coursework) - [Guidance note: Credit and recognition of prior learning | Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency \(teqsa.gov.au\)](#)

Whateley (2024) Rolling Audits – a mechanism for self-assurance - https://www.musicum20.com/files/ugd/6113ad_beb80a2de7ae43dc9fb8c7bedfa4e78b.pdf

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