



ACADEMIC CREDIT AND RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING POLICY

Policy Number: [Insert policy number here]

Policy Title: Academic Credit and Recognition of Prior Learning Policy

Policy Owner: PVC Academic

Policy Contact Officer: University Registrar

Key words: credit, RPL, articulation, formal learning, informal learning, non-formal learning

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide a transparent, equitable, and consistent framework for the recognition and transfer of credit for prior learning towards academic programmes at SINU. It supports student mobility and lifelong learning by ensuring that previous studies and relevant experiences are appropriately acknowledged.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

SINU recognises that learners take diverse pathways to achieve qualifications and is committed to maintaining high academic standards.

The University values students' prior learning, whether formal, informal or non-formal and will carefully assess applications for academic credit and recognition of prior learning.

3. SCOPE

This policy applies to all current and prospective students including technical and vocational education and training qualifications, higher education coursework programmes and pathway programmes.

4. DEFINITIONS

For this Policy, the following definitions apply:

Term	Definitions
Advanced Standing	Is the recognition of prior study or learning that can be credited towards a qualification, thereby reducing the number of units required to complete a Programme. Advanced standing is also referred to as 'staircasing' arrangements and is granted on admission to a programme.

Articulation Agreement	A formal agreement between SINU and another institution to recognize and grant credit for completed qualifications.
Assessor	A nominated person, usually a Programme Coordinator, with sufficient knowledge and skills of the discipline and programme to assess equivalence of formal or informal or non-formal learning and confirm credit.
Block Credit	Credit granted for whole stages or components of a qualification, typically based on an articulation agreement.
Coursework programmes	A method of teaching and learning that leads to the acquisition of skills and knowledge that does not include a major research component.
Credit precedents database	A database maintained by Student Administration Services of units from other institutions that have been previously confirmed as equivalent to units in specific SINU programmes.
Credit Transfer	The process of granting credit for units previously completed at SINU or another recognized institution, including international institutions.
Formal learning	Learning that takes place through a structured programme of learning that leads to full or partial achievement of an officially accredited course.
Informal Learning	Learning gained through work, social, family, hobby or leisure activities and experiences
Non-formal Learning	Learning gained in work or other settings that has no formal syllabus or certification.
Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)	A process that involves assessment of an individual's relevant prior learning (including formal, informal, and non-formal learning) to determine credit outcomes. Also known as 'assessment of prior learning' or 'recognition of current competencies'.
Specified Credit	Specified credit is given where there is direct equivalence between a unit in a programme and the 'Formal learning' undertaken either within SINU or at any other tertiary institution prior to admission to a programme.
Unspecified Credit	Unspecified credit is given where the formal prior learning is deemed to be relevant and at an equivalent level to a part or parts of a programme. Unspecified credit may be in a general subject area and granted towards the programme

5 POLICY PRINCIPLES

- 5.1 Students may be admitted to an appropriate programme and exempt from completing the requirements within a programme if they are granted Credit or Recognition of Prior Learning.
- 5.2 The University will ensure that Academic Credit and Recognition of Prior Learning will only be granted if:
- 5.2.1 students are not disadvantaged in achieving the expected learning outcomes for the programme of study or qualification; and
 - 5.2.2 the integrity of the programme of study and the qualification are maintained.
- 5.3 To ensure integrity, decisions in relation to credit and recognition of prior learning will be submitted via the SINU Academic Credit Application Form or Recognition of Prior Learning Application Form and will ensure:
- 5.1.1 be evidence-based, equitable and transparent.
 - 5.1.2 be applied consistently and fairly with decisions subject to appeal and review.
 - 5.1.3 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 or competencies of the qualification.
 - 5.1.4 be academically defensible and consider the students' ability to meet the learning outcomes or competencies of the qualification successfully, including meeting professional registration requirements.
 - 5.1.5 be decided in a timely way so that students' access to qualifications is not unnecessarily inhibited.
 - 5.1.6 allow for outcomes to be used to meet prerequisites or other specified requirements for entry into a programme of study leading to a qualification or for the partial fulfillment of the requirements of a qualification; and
 - 5.1.7 be formally documented for the student including reasons for decisions and outcomes.
- 5.2 To qualify for recognition of prior learning, formal learning must have been undertaken within the past 10 years of the first date of enrolment into the programme for which credit is sought, to ensure.
- 5.3 Credit may be granted as 'specified credit' or 'unspecified credit'.
- 5.4 The University may allow credit transfers to a programme from credits obtained by a student in an equivalent programme at another institution. The credit granted will normally be for specified units in the designated programme.
- 5.5 For higher education programmes, the maximum amount of credit for formal learning completed at another institution that can be granted towards a Programme is limited to approximately 67 per cent, i.e. two-thirds of the programme.
- 5.6 For TVET programmes, as per National Training Packages rules, all completed competency units, that are assessed as current, will be provided credit.

5.7 An application for Recognition of Prior Learning is through an application for enrolment in a programme of study at the University. Applicants may apply for an assessment of RPL through the prescribed form.

6 Procedures for administering credit and recognition of prior learning

The procedure for reviewing applications for Credit programmes is as follows:

6.1 When students receive credit for studies completed at another institution, the grades awarded by that institution are not transferable and will not be included on the SINU transcript or included in the GPA calculation.

6.2 If a student has failed a unit at SINU, credit can only be granted for this unit where the nominated assessor has evidence that the unit learning outcomes have been met successfully through subsequent learning at another institution.

6.3 Credit must be reapplied for when changing programmes and will be re-assessed. Credit granted previously is not a guarantee that credit will be awarded in a future programme.

6.4 Credit precedents will be recorded by SINU in a credit precedents database.

6.5 Assessors reviewing applications for credit based on equivalency of successfully completed prior formal learning to one or more units within a qualification, and must consider the following:

6.5.1 Learning Outcomes: the contemporary relevance of the knowledge, skills and competencies a person has acquired and is able to demonstrate because of their learning and generally, learning outcomes must be at least 80% similar.

6.5.2 Volume of Learning: the nominal hours for Higher Education and units of competency or hours for VET.

6.5.3 Programme of Study: content, discipline or subject matter, or field of education.

6.5.4 Learning and Assessment Approaches: the assessment authentication methods; and

6.5.5 SIQF level: the level of learning, the relative complexity and/or depth of achievement and the autonomy required to demonstrate that achievement.

6.6 Applications for credit must be assessed and communicated to students within 28 days.

6.7 Unspecified credit may only be granted Generic or electives in Higher Education qualifications based on prior formal learning that is deemed to be at the right SIQF level, with appropriate volume of learning and learning and assessment approaches, and with content that is deemed permissible as equivalent to an elective option.

6.8 For TVET, any credit must align with the training product outcomes. Recognition must meet the packaging rules and the overarching intent and job role of the training product.

6.9 TVET credit is applied at the unit of competency level, providing students with credit for previously successfully completed formal learning/training. It can only be applied to the formal learning/training's content, performance and knowledge learning outcomes, and assessment condition requirements are wholly equivalent to units of competency within the training package the student is applying for or is admitted in to. Mapping to determine equivalence of elements and performance criteria, range of conditions, and assessment requirements must be undertaken

6.10A microcredential may be credited where the nominated Assessor is satisfied that the learning outcomes, content and assessment is appropriate to the relevant programme, including at an appropriate SIQF level.

6.11 RPL is a formal assessment process where all unit requirements are addressed, and the judgement is made using evidence that meets all the rules of evidence. RPL will only be granted if the applicant provides valid and appropriate evidence to support their claim.

7 Revoking credit for prior learning

7.1 Any recommendations for revoking credit previously granted must include justification and be confirmed to the University Registrar.

7.2 A decision to grant credit may be revoked if:

- 7.2.1 the student changes their Programme (particularly a change of study area), and their enrolment is governed by a different set of completion requirements.
- 7.2.2 the decision was based on incomplete, incorrect, misleading or false information provided by the student or certifying authority.
- 7.2.3 errors were made in assessing an application that may result in an outcome detrimental to the student.
- 7.2.4 the student has not shown adequate academic progress in their Programme and the University considers that the student may benefit from undertaking units for which credit was granted, e.g. to develop prerequisite or foundation skills and knowledge to assist students to complete more advanced units in the programme.
- 7.2.5 the student does not begin their Programme within 12 months after being granted credit.

7.3 The decision-maker must record their decisions in the Student Management System, including reasons for revocation, so students can be notified, and the University can retain relevant records.

8 Review of credit decision

8.1 Students who have had an unsuccessful credit application or credit revoked can request a review of the decision, providing they provide evidence that the following grounds exist:

- 8.1.1 the credit application was submitted in the correct manner, and all the relevant documentation was provided.
- 8.1.2 the application satisfied the requirements of relevance, comparability, and equivalence of all the learning outcomes, volume of learning within the Solomon Islands Qualifications Framework level of learning, unit of study (including its content), and learning and assessment approaches.

8.2 Only students who are currently enrolled or admitted into a Programme at the University may request a review.

8.3 Review requests must be in writing to the University Registrar within 10 working days of receiving notice of the original decision and include a full statement of their reason/s for requesting a review, including why they believe the decision is unreasonable.

8.4 The University Registrar will confirm the decision with the relevant Programme Coordinator prior to communicating with students.

9 ACCOUNTABILITIES - ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

9.1 Students are responsible for:

- 9.1.1 Completing an application following the appropriate process and timeline.
- 9.1.2 Providing documentation and evidence to support their application, including providing additional information as requested; and
- 9.1.3 Understanding their obligations and the impacts on their programme of study.

9.2 The University Registrar and Student Academic Services are responsible for:

- 9.2.1 Providing information regarding the Academic Credit and Recognition of Prior Learning Policy and associated procedures through the admission process.
- 9.2.2 Communicating with the student.
- 9.2.3 Communicating with nominated assessors and supporting them to meet timelines.
- 9.2.4 Updating study plans for students.
- 9.2.5 Manage records, including credit-related applications, decisions, the amount and type of credit granted, and the reasons for decisions within the Student Management System.
- 9.2.6 Manage updates to the credit precedents database; and
- 9.2.7 Manage appeals including consultation with Faculty.
- 9.2.8 Monitoring compliance with Policy requirements including timeliness of response and integrity of decisions.

9.3 Faculties/SINU TAFE and Teaching areas are responsible for:

- 9.3.1 Reviewing programme structures and defining where certain types of credit can be approved.
- 9.3.2 Producing guidelines to Student Administration Services relevant to the local area context on assessing applications to ensure consistency of outcomes and compliance with this policy and associated procedures.
- 9.3.3 Maintaining a list of nominated assessors, usually the Programme Coordinators, that are staff with relevant academic qualifications and understanding of Programme requirements, able to assess applications.
- 9.3.4 Reviewing credit precedents; and
- 9.3.5 Ensuring updates or changes credit precedents are provided to Student Administration Services.

9.4 Nominated assessors are responsible for:

- 9.4.1 Assessing applications according to this Policy.
- 9.4.2 Meeting timelines for assessing applications.
- 9.4.3 Providing detailed responses to students to explain decisions; and
- 9.4.4 Communicating with students and Student and Administration Services as required; and
- 9.4.5 Ensuring all evidence and reasons for decisions are recorded accurately on the student record.

10 RELATED DOCUMENTS

Solomon Islands Qualification Framework
 SITESA Solomon Islands Quality Standards Framework
 Admission and Enrolment Policy

Curriculum Design, Programme and Unit Policy
 Programme Development and Review Policy

11 MONITORING AND REVIEW

- 11.1 Outcomes and decisions will be periodically audited (at least every three years) to ensure they do not academically disadvantage students, remain current and meet the intended aims of this Policy.
- 11.2 All applications and supporting documentation submitted will be recorded on the Student Management System.

12 APPROVAL AND AMENDED HISTORY

<i>Policy Approved by:</i>	<i>SINU Council</i>
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