

**Policy Title: ASSESSMENT OF PRIOR LEARNING**

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### **1. Purpose and Objectives**

AIMU recognizes that learning occurs with experiences encountered both formally and informally. Therefore, the University does not expect students to repeat learning that has been successfully completed at a similar level and standard elsewhere, where that work is substantially the same in content and standard as that required for the student's current program of study at AIMU.

### **2. Definitions, Terms, Acronyms**

**Block credit** – credit which is granted as a specific number of credits and may be granted on the basis of studies judged to be comparable to part of a given program. Block credit may also be granted where formal agreements exist between the higher education institution where the credit was granted and AIMU.

**Previous formal studies** – consideration granted with respect to courses and/or programs completed at this or another higher education institution but may include studies undertaken at other accredited or recognized learning organizations.

### **3. Policy Scope/Coverage**

This policy applies to all students at AIMU.

### **4. Policy Statement**

The University may grant students credit for previous formal studies in relation to:

1. **Admission** - Prior formal learning can be used for the admission requirements to a program including satisfying prerequisite requirements or prior study.
2. **Credit Transfer** – Where a number of credits, up to a specified limit, may be granted towards an AIMU award, on the basis of previous formal learning.
3. **Exemption** - While no reduction in the total number of credits required to satisfy program requirements is given for prior formal learning, students do not have to complete some specified courses that may be core requirements in the program list.

### **PROCEDURES**

#### **1. Purpose and Objectives**

These procedures enact the Policy of Credit for Previous Studies

#### **2. Definitions of Terms Not previously defined**

**Specified credit** – credit which is granted when an exact or near exact equivalence to an AIMU course can be demonstrated. Specified credit is more commonly granted in set programs and/or for compulsory courses.

**Unspecified credit** – credit which is granted when an exact or near exact equivalence cannot be demonstrated. Unspecified credit is also granted for elective courses.

#### **3. Procedures Scope/Coverage**

These procedures apply to all students at AIMU.

#### **4. Procedures Statement**

Faculties, by virtue of their responsibility to manage degree programs –

- receive applications for credit transfer or exemption, including applications for recognition of formal studies

- assess and manage applications in a timely manner; and
- notify students of the outcome of their applications in a timely manner.

In so doing, faculties are responsible for the –

- maintenance and publication of guidelines that outline a uniformly flexible, consistent and equitable approach to the assessment of credit transfer and exemption;
- regular review of faculty guidelines with respect to consistency, equity and preservation of standards.

University policy and procedures, and faculty guidelines and procedures on credit for previous studies must be widely publicized for the information of prospective and continuing students.

## 5. Description

### 5.1 Admission

The Admission Policy makes adequate provision to use previous courses to assess both entry ranks for applicants and to determine the satisfaction of prerequisites. Likewise, the Program Rules for many coursework programs make provision for prior studies, and experience to be used as the basis for admission.

### 5.2 Credit transfer

5.2.1 Where credit is transferred to a program, a number of credits up to a specified limit, may be granted towards a AIMU award, on the basis of previous formal learning.

5.2.2 The type of credit transfer granted should depend on the program rules and structure of an individual program. The type/s of credit transfer granted for individual programs must be outlined in faculty guidelines and includes specified, unspecified or block credit.

5.2.3 Where ever possible, specified credit should be granted.

5.2.4 Block credit should only be granted in cases of formal articulation agreements.

5.2.5 The University ceased granting transfer credit for A' Level grades equivalent to less than 70%.

5.2.6 The maximum amount of credit that can be given may only be granted where the prior study is considered to have a very high degree of overlap with the content of the bachelor degree (as assessed by mapping of program and course content).

The maximum number of credits that can be awarded as transfer credits range from 50-60% of the total number of required credits for the program as specified by the respective program.

5.2.7 An allocation of “block credit” will be made (depending on the program) or, where course mapping is available, specified credit. Where performance-level assessment is available for the relevant courses, this can assist in allocating credit.

## **5.4 Consideration of Recognized Prior Learning (RPL)**

### 5.4.1 Principles underpinning RPL

When considering the use of RPL for the granting of credit for the purposes of credit transfer, admission or exemption, faculties apply the following principles:

- granting credit for RPL will be considered only when proof of experience equivalent to a AIMU course can be demonstrated;
- total credit granted, including that granted for formal learning, must be consistent with AIMU Award Rules 1.6 – Credit for other study;
- information about RPL should be readily available to prospective applicants and should include a clear statement of the learning or competency outcomes that will be applied in assessing RPL applications;
- assessment of RPL must be consistent and equitable for all students; and

- acceptable quality assurance principles must be applied to ensure that prior learning is of an appropriate standard to permit the granting of consideration with respect to admission, credit transfer or exemption.

#### 5.4.2 Assessment of RPL

Assessment of RPL must fulfill the same criteria that are associated with assessment of learning outcomes in any conventional course: assessment must be valid, current, sufficient, reliable and authentic.

Assessment will be the responsibility of the faculty. Assessment might rely on—

- a portfolio containing a range of supporting materials and evidence;
- work-based assessments;
- examinations;
- projects;
- interviews;
- demonstrations; or
- some combination of the above.

### 6. Administrative Procedures

#### 6.1 Decision makers

The Dean administering the program in which the student is enrolled makes decisions on:

- the granting of credit transfer/exemption for formal learning; and
- unless otherwise stipulated in the relevant AIMU Admission Rules whether admission requirements have been satisfied on the basis of formal or informal learning.

No officer of the University has the power to rescind the granting of credit or an exemption (refer section 9).

#### 6.2 Assessment of applications from students

The Office of the Registrar engages Faculty to assess applications from students, including prospective students, for credit transfer and exemption. Faculty guidelines and procedures may include the delegation of credit assessment to their schools.

In the case of new international students, faculties may delegate responsibility to assess transfer credit to the Admissions Office.

#### 6.3 Lodgment of applications

All applications for credit or exemption should be completed using the University's application form.

Applications should be submitted to the relevant office. Incomplete applications may be rejected.

#### 6.4 Supporting documentation

AIMU students need not submit additional documentation if the prior formal learning for which they are seeking credit transfer or exemption is from an AIMU program. Students who transfer to AIMU from another institution or who request credit transfer or exemption based on RPL must also supply-

- up-to-date, official academic records/transcripts. Evidence should be in the form of original documents, or copies certified true by the issuing institution, a Justice of the Peace, or other recognized official; and
- a certified detailed description of the course or courses (extended syllabus with a week-by-week list of topics covered in each course, aims and objectives, contact hours, texts and references, and methods of assessment/grading criteria) for required supporting documentation for credit or exemption based on RPL, see Section 5.4.2 - Assessment of RPL above.

## 6.5 Submission of applications and notification of outcome

Applications for credit transfer or exemption should be submitted as soon as necessary documentation is complete, but no later than the enrolment closing date for new enrolments for the semester in which the award of credit transfer or exemption may affect the student's program of study.

The Office of the Registrar notifies students of the outcome of their application as soon as practicable, but no later than two weeks after lodgment of a complete application.

Students must be formally notified of the outcome of their application. Notification may be provided either electronically or via a formal letter from the Office of the Registrar.

## 7. Requirements for International Students

7.1 Applications for credit transfer or exemption should be submitted as soon as necessary documentation is complete, but no later than the enrolment closing date for new enrolments for the semester in which the award of credit may affect the student's program of study.

7.2 The Office of the Registrar will inform the Admission Office of final decisions on credit for international students no later than the beginning of the second week of classes of the student's first semester of enrolment.

7.3 By the end of the second week of semester, the Admission Office will send a letter to international students informing them of their final credit status. This must be signed by the student and returned to the Admission Office. This letter should be retained on the central student file.

7.4 Credit transfer granted after this time, which leads to a shortening of the student's program, should be reported to the Admission's Officer in the Student Centre for appropriate action regarding visa etc as deemed appropriate.

## 8. University and Faculty Responsibilities

### 8.1 General

The University should –

- maintain the Credit Transfer Database;
- regularly audit credit transfer processes, precedents and decisions, involving both formal and informal prior learning.

Registrar's Office should–

- establish procedures to ensure timely consideration of applications, including a maximum turnaround time for consideration of the application and notification to the applicant;
- receive and assess applications for credit transfer/exemption including those for RPL;
- while taking into account relevant program requirements and rules, grant credit transfer for work already undertaken of a comparable standard to enable the student to complete the program in a minimum time;
- wherever possible, grant in the form of specified credit;
- record the credit transfer or exemption on the student's official academic transcript;
- record precedents in the Credit Transfer Database to ensure a transparent, equitable and consistent treatment of all applications;
- keep adequate records of applications and decisions;
- advise AIMU Admission Office of credit transfer granted to international students; and
- forward the original application for credit transfer (including credit for RPL) and exemption, including all supporting documentation to student's files and a Transfer /RPL Credit File.

### 8.2 Articulation of policies and requirements

The Office of the Registrar should:

- *ensure that credit transfer guidelines and credit transfer precedents are regularly reviewed, transparent and readily accessible by students and staff;*
- *provide a clear statement of the learning or competency outcomes that will be applied to assessing RPL applications and of quality assurance procedures; and*
- publish widely
  - restrictions and limitation on credit transfer (e.g. time limits; consideration of credit for informal prior learning);
  - information on the criteria used and matters taken into account when applications are being assessed;
  - details of documentation required in support of applications for credit transfer or exemption;
  - indication that eligibility for credit transfer or exemption does not guarantee a place in a program;
  - clearly articulated information on the type and extent of credit transfer that may be granted by the faculty for each of its programs/courses in accordance with University rules

### **8.3 Monitoring of decisions and review of policy**

Office of the Registrar should -

- audit every three years, credit transfer precedents and decisions on credit transfer/exemption including that for RPL;
- review regularly, the validity and equity of faculty guidelines and criteria for the assessment of applications for credit transfer/exemption including that for RPL in light of approved University policy and, where appropriate, establish new criteria;
- record the progress of students who have been granted credit transfer, to help ensure equity and consistency in decision making; and
- maintain a credit transfer database including the -
  - name of the institution whose courses have been assessed for credit transfer
  - year in which the course was completed
  - year in which credit transfer was granted
  - name of the academic staff member who performed the assessment
  - the name and student number (if applicable) of the student
  - provide details of credit assessment to students, academic advisers, the International Admissions Section and to other institutions. In doing so, faculties must indicate that the assessments are indicative/advisory and that only a formal, individualized determination from the faculty will have any binding force
  - report regularly to the Academic Committee on the application of the University policy

### **9. Rescinding of Credit**

Once a decision has been made to grant credit or an exemption, no officer of the University can rescind the decision in the absence of a patent error or fraud.

This policy consists of five (5) pages.