



Melbourne College of Divinity

Course Credit Policy

Version approved by MCD Coursework Studies Committee, 7 October 2010

Purpose

This policy outlines the principles for awarding credit, or recognition of prior learning, towards Melbourne College of Divinity (MCD) qualifications.

1. Types of Credit

1.1. MCD will grant credit for previous learning where this is assessed as equivalent to MCD study, subject to the conditions and limits stated below.

1.2. Credit towards a course for previous learning may include credit transfer and recognition of prior learning.

1.2.1 Credit transfer may be granted for previous learning in an Australian university or Higher Education provider, or overseas equivalents of these.

1.2.2 Recognition of prior learning (RPL) may be granted for previous non-accredited formal study such as professional development or on-the job-training, or for informal learning such as work experience.

1.3. RPL may also be granted for admission to a course, where an applicant's previous non-accredited formal study or informal learning is assessed as equivalent to the prerequisite qualification.

1.4. Block credit transfer is normally considered to fulfil any progression requirements for a stage of a course. It may be granted for one or more semesters, and intends to advance students beyond the entry level requirements of a course.

1.5. Where a student has completed a unit external to the MCD which is closely related to an MCD unit, specified credit for that specific MCD unit may be granted. The recording of such credit should be identified by the unit code.

1.6. Eligibility for credit towards a course does not guarantee admission to that course.

1.7 Cross-institutional credit. Students who have commenced their courses may seek approval to take units from institutions external to the MCD, where comparable units within the MCD are not available. Students should seek written approval from their coursework coordinators before enrolling in such units; such written approval should include the number of points to be granted on successful completion, and the discipline and level. Students should provide unit outlines of the external units they intend to study, and demonstrate to the coursework coordinator the relevance of these units to their courses. If the coursework coordinator supports a cross-institutional credit request, the coursework coordinator should complete a credit application on the student's behalf and forward it to the Director of Coursework, who either approves the application or sends on to the Coursework Studies Committee (see 7.3 How to Apply for Credit). If and when the student completes the cross-institutional study, the student should send the coursework coordinator a copy of the external transcript. The

coursework coordinator should keep a copy for RTI records, and send a copy to the Director Coursework, who will match the transcript with the original credit request.

2. Credit Transfer

2.1. Students may apply for credit transfer where they have successfully completed units (generally with a mark of 50% or above, although in some cases higher levels are required) at a similar level and standard in previous studies. A near pass grade or terminating pass at another institution will not be considered successful completion of the unit.

2.2. Credit transfer is assessed on the basis of equivalence of learning content, modes of instruction and modes of assessment in terms of the curriculum, depth of study and credit point value of the previous unit of learning.

2.3. A MCD degree is an academically coherent and cumulative program of specific units that contribute not only to the acquisition of knowledge, but to the development of MCD graduate attributes. Enrolled students seeking credit for units undertaken at another institution will need to demonstrate that there is significant educational advantage that cannot be derived from studying MCD units. This applies to cross-institutional, study abroad and exchange study.

2.4. Applicants who have previously received credit towards a course offered by another institution must re-apply for credit towards a MCD course, providing verified copies of transcripts and other required documentation of all previous study for which they wish to receive credit. Any requirements for recency of previous study will apply.

2.5 The MCD verifies the equivalence of previous study undertaken at overseas institutions by checking the AEI-NOOSR country education profile database.

3. Recognition of Prior Learning

3.1. Recognised prior learning is assessed on the basis of equivalent learning outcomes or competencies. Assessments will be evidence-based and the College will determine a variety of methods and instruments to establish equivalence.

4. Currency requirements

4.1. To be eligible for specified credit, previous studies in theology-related disciplines must have been completed no more than ten years prior to the year of application for credit.

5. Limits on credit

5.1. Credit may be given for all units for which equivalence of learning is established up to the limit of two-thirds of the course for undergraduate programs, and one-half of the course for graduate and postgraduate coursework programs.

5.2. In the case of a 360 credit point undergraduate degree, a maximum of 240 credit points of credit can be granted. In the case of a 90 credit point graduate diploma or Masters course, a maximum of 45 credit points of credit can be granted.

5.3. Exceptions to this rule are:

5.3.1 These limits do not apply to MCD nested programs such as Associate Diploma/Diploma/Advanced Diploma, or Graduate Certificate/Graduate Diploma, where the units in the two courses are at the same level. Students taking a Diploma in Ministry who decide to upgrade to an Advanced Diploma in Ministry, will receive full credit for their completed Associate Diploma in Ministry units. Likewise, students in a Graduate Certificate of Theology who decide to upgrade to a Graduate Diploma in Theology will receive full credit for their completed Graduate Certificate in Theology units. Students

who graduate in the lower award who choose to port those units to a higher award will be required to surrender the lower award before becoming eligible to graduate from the higher award.

5.3.2 The Academic Board may set a lower limit on total credit towards a course where this is warranted by considerations such as fulfilling vocation-based requirements such as Church ordination or professional accreditation.

5.3.3 For double degrees, students are obligated to meet the requirements of both individual awards and need to complete a set number of credit points of MCD units within the course per award as specified in the relevant Regulation.

6. Timeline for the Application for Credit

6.1 Normally, students include an application for course credit with their application for admission to an MCD course. The MCD will issue overseas students with a Letter of Offer and Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE) which specify the duration of the program with the course credit taken into account. Overseas students will accept the credit when they sign their Acceptance Contract.

6.2 Where necessary, coursework coordinators may submit applications for course credit after admission into a course. For overseas students in this case, the MCD provides a record of the course credit to the student, obtains the student's acceptance of this record, and places the record on the student's file. If the course credit granted leads to a shortening of the student's course, the MCD reports the change of course duration via PRISMS under section 19 of the ESOS Act.

6.3 Credit should be resolved by the end of the student's first semester of study.

7. How to apply for credit

7.1 Students need to provide to their Coursework Coordinators evidence of previous studies:

7.1.1 original or certified copies of official transcripts of previous studies

7.1.2 if requested, synopses of individual units for which credit is being applied.

7.2 The Coursework Coordinator pre-assesses the transcripts, and, if s/he determines that credit is warranted, completes an Application for Credit and submits it with the transcripts to the Director Coursework.

7.3 If the Director Coursework and Coursework Coordinator agree on the credit applicable, then the Credit Application form is adjusted accordingly and passed to the Enrolments Officer for action. If they cannot agree, the Director Coursework adds the case to the Coursework Studies Committee for a determination. Once the Coursework Studies Committee has determined the outcome, the Credit Application form is adjusted accordingly and passed to the Enrolments Officer for action.

7.4 Students will be notified of the outcome.

APPENDIX – Glossary of Terms

Accredited Course: A course formally approved by the appropriate State or Territory Government authority. Universities are authorised by governments through legislation to accredit their own courses. Other higher education and VET providers must have their courses approved by the appropriate authorities in their State or Territory.

Advanced Standing: An alternate term for credit, indicating that a student may commence in a course without having to take some of the foundational units.

AEI-NOOSR Country Education Profiles: Australia Education International – National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition online database accessed via Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) AEI website. Provides information and guidelines on comparing qualifications from 119 countries with Australian standards

Block Credit Transfer: Block credit transfer is a standard arrangement. It does not involve individual student assessment. Block credit transfer involves credit being granted for a whole section of a course such as a semester or year of full-time study in the course, rather than for specific units.

Credit: Where a student is assessed and considered previously to have completed the equivalent of a unit or a proportion of a course through formal study (see Credit transfer) or other study, work or life-experience (see Recognition of prior learning), they may receive credit for that unit or proportion, and the course requirements may be correspondingly reduced.

Credit Transfer: Granting of credit towards a course, on the basis of a course or unit(s) previously completed in a course with a university, or Higher Education provider, or equivalent. Credit transfer involves assessment of equivalence of the previous unit(s) with the unit(s) for which credit is being given.

Discipline Specific Credit (see also Specified Credit and Unspecified Credit): Credit that is specified only by credit point value, level and discipline, but not by unit codes. That is, the credit is identified as being within the discipline, but not as equivalent to any specific unit. Thus it may contribute to completion of major, minor or sequence requirements but may not stand in place of a compulsory unit. Credit granted at MCD is normally discipline-specific.

Exemption without Credit: Where, on the basis of previous similar study, a student is waived the requirement to pass a core unit, but in its place is required to complete another unit of the same credit point value.

Nested Programs: Closely related MCD courses where, on successful completion of the lower level course, the student may be eligible for block credit towards the higher level course: eg an Associate Diploma in Ministry for which the student may receive 100% credit of 120 credit points towards the Diploma in Ministry.

Overseas Student: A person (whether within or outside Australia) who holds a student visa as defined by the ESOS Act.

Registered Training Organisation (RTO): An organisation registered by a State or Territory recognition authority to deliver training and/or conduct assessments and issue nationally recognised qualifications in accordance with the Australian Recognition Framework, including TAFE institutes, adult and community education providers, private providers, community organisations, schools, higher education institutions, commercial and enterprise training providers, industry bodies and other organisations meeting the registration requirements.

Recognition of Prior Learning: RPL is an assessment process that assesses the individual's non-formal and informal learning to determine the extent to which that individual has achieved the required learning outcomes, competency outcomes, or standards for entry to, and/or partial or total completion of, a qualification.

Specified Credit (see also Discipline Specific Credit and Unspecified Credit): Credit for a specific MCD unit. The recording of such credit should be identified by the unit code.

Tertiary and Further Education Institution (TAFE): A publicly funded post-secondary organisation which provides a range of technical and vocational education and training courses and other programs: eg, entry and bridging courses, language and literacy courses, adult basic education courses, Senior Secondary Certificate of Education courses, personal enrichment courses, and small business courses. Each State and Territory has its own TAFE system.

Unspecified Credit (see also Discipline Specific Credit and Specified Credit): Credit that is specified only by credit point value and level, and which can only contribute to course completion by standing in place of elective units.