



# Credit Transfer

FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING



COFFEE BREAK GUIDE

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**CREDIT TRANSFER AND ASSESSMENT** of prior learning avoid duplication of study, make it easier for students to move between programmes and institutions, make it quicker for students to complete their qualifications and can provide a pathway to higher qualifications.

## What is credit transfer?

Credit transfer is the granting of credits towards a qualification on the basis of credits already achieved in another qualification. It recognises formal learning. Credit is given for a completed course or subject that is equivalent to a course or subject in another qualification. A credit transfer is sometimes referred to as a cross credit.

## What is assessment of prior learning?

Assessment of prior learning (APL) is a process for assessing evidence of knowledge, skills and understanding that is based on informal education, work or life experiences. It suits people who have relevant work skills or knowledge, paid or unpaid work experience, life experience or community work experience. Credit is given where the prior learning has met the outcomes of a course or subject in a qualification. APL is sometimes referred to as recognition of prior learning (RPL).

## What evidence can be used for APL?

Usually a portfolio of evidence is presented (along with an interview in some cases), which could contain:

- job descriptions
- work history
- time in a job
- attestations
- work samples
- in-house courses
- work records
- demonstrations
- performance appraisals
- references
- résumés, cvs
- letters from customers
- depth interviews
- logbooks
- journals
- diaries
- videos, photographs
- personal statements
- work samples (reports, spreadsheets, letters).



## What evidence can be used for credit transfer?

- academic record
- results notification
- assessments
- text book lists
- course descriptors, prescriptions, or outlines showing learning outcomes

### TIP

A facilitator/assessor should discuss the evidence with the student and provide advice. This can be a developmental process, assisting the learner through a process of reflection, learning and preparing a portfolio of evidence.

## Six criteria for evaluating credit transfer and APL

**1. Authenticity:** Certificates, results notices, academic record, letters of support should be originals or certified copies. The assessor should be able to verify that course outlines, descriptors and other documents are authentic. If the documents are not in English, they should be translated into English by an independent translator.

**2. Sufficiency:** The evidence should be in sufficient detail to enable the assessor to identify the learning outcomes, content, levels and credits the student may have achieved.

**3. Relevance and currency:** The evidence must demonstrate that the student's skills and knowledge are current (relate to learning within the last few years). The evidence should also be relevant to any cultural, legal or professional practices and principles in the course and relevant to the New Zealand context, if appropriate.



**4. Learning outcomes:** The assessor needs to match the evidence against the course learning outcomes. For achievement-based courses, take an holistic approach – a direct match to all learning outcomes is not usually possible. There need not be evidence of having achieved all learning outcomes, because a student can pass an achievement-based course with a mark of less than 100 percent. As a guide, 80 percent agreement between the evidence and the course is sufficient, but any essential learning outcomes should be met. For competency-based courses, such as unit standards, there must be evidence of competence against all learning outcomes.

**5. Level:** The student’s learning must be at or above the standard expected in the course (its Framework level). However, while each case needs to be judged on its merits, it may be possible for students to meet this criterion by higher than average achievement at a lower level – for example, an above average grade (B or better) in a lower-level achievement-based course or evidence of higher achievement than required for competence in a lower-level competency-based course.

**6. Credit value:** The credits previously achieved must equal or exceed the credits for the course. For APL, the assessor must determine whether the amount of prior learning meets the required learning for the course (10 hours learning per credit).

#### TIP

A checklist listing these six criteria is a good way to document APL and credit transfer decisions.

#### Recommending a decision

If the six criteria have been met, the decision will be to approve one of the following.

**Assessment of prior learning (APL):** This recognises informal learning, i.e. learning achieved through work experience.

**Credit transfer or cross credit:** This recognises formal learning, i.e. successful achievement of a course or courses in another qualification.

#### TIP

A credit transfer decision is based on comparing formal credit-earning courses. Therefore, only evidence directly related to those courses is relevant, i.e. academic record or results notifications to show credits achieved, and course descriptors, course outlines and assessment tasks to show outcomes met and levels. Who the student is, is not relevant.

**Exemption or unspecified credit:** This is where the student’s prior learning (formal or informal) does not match specific courses, but where this learning has equivalent credit value, does not overlap with other courses credited towards the qualification and contributes to meeting the graduate profile for the qualification. Exemptions are usually for generic courses or lower-stage courses in a multi-stage qualification.

#### If the six criteria have not been met

The decision will be one of the following.

**Approval not recommended:** There is evidence that the learning outcomes have not been met. In cases of doubt, the student may be asked to provide further evidence.

**Accelerated assessment:** Where there is evidence of prior learning, but insufficient evidence for credit transfer or APL, the student may be advised to enrol in the course(s) and be offered accelerated assessment.

**Further evidence required:** In cases of doubt, the student may be asked for more evidence, such as an attestation by a qualified person, additional assessment to confirm learning, work or academic products, or attendance at an interview.

#### TIP

Don’t ask for further evidence to avoid making a decision. A student is entitled to have their evidence assessed and a decision made.

If additional assessment is used to confirm learning, it will be for a sample of outcomes. Asking students to complete all assessments used for on-course delivery is not APL. It is accelerated assessment.

**Conditional approval:** Where direct evidence is difficult to obtain, credit may be approved subject to passing a higher-level course in the same subject.

#### Assessment principles

In principle, APL and credit transfer are similar to on-course assessment. In each case, students’ evidence is assessed against the learning outcomes. The evidence may differ, but the assessment principles are the same. APL and credit transfer decisions should also be moderated for validity, reliability and fairness.