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Awarding Credit

The purpose of credit in the Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector is to provide recognition of a unit of competency (unit) and/or modules in which a learner has previously been assessed as competent.

Clause 3.5 of the *Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015* (the Standards) states:

*The RTO accepts and provides **credit** to learners for units of competency and/or modules (unless licensing or regulatory requirements prevent this) where these are evidenced by:*

- *AQF certification documentation issued by any other RTO or AQF authorised issuing organisation, or*
- *authenticated VET transcripts issued by the Registrar.*

This Fact Sheet provides advice for RTOs awarding credit for units and/or modules and considers credit in relation to training product revisions and changes that can occur over time. Guidance is provided on the following two situations where credit is possible by an RTO:

1. The student provides evidence of holding the **current** unit and/or module; and
2. The student provides evidence of holding the **superseded** unit and/or module reflecting the current unit and/or module outcomes.

On 11 May 2023, the Council confirmed its advice¹ for RTOs on granting credit to learners for **superseded** equivalent² units and/or modules:

- RTOs can award credit using the 'equivalent' determination where the unit and/or modules already attained by the learner **immediately** precedes the unit and/or module for which credit transfer will be awarded.
- Where an award of credit is sought for equivalent units and/or modules that have been superseded **twice or more** (e.g. there is a unit and/or modules interceding):
 - the RTO must conduct a mapping process to confirm no gaps exist in the content and learning outcomes³ between the unit and/or module already attained by the learner and the unit and/or module for which the learner seeks an award of credit; and
 - where a mapping process identifies gaps in the content and learning outcomes, no award of credit can be provided.

This advice is in line with the requirements of the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) which indicates that:

RTOs are responsible for ensuring the quality of the learning outcomes and that the graduate has satisfactorily completed any requirements for the awarding of the qualification⁴.

¹ For providers who are not registered with TAC, please ensure that you are adhering to the guidance of the relevant VET regulator.

² Equivalence as published on the national register on VET, training.gov.au

³ Content includes a unit of competency's Elements, Performance Criteria and Assessment Requirements

⁴ Australian Qualifications Framework – Second Edition January 2013 (page28)

This advice is also in line with the requirements of the AQF Pathways Policy⁵ which indicates that:

- *the RTO will 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 of the qualification; and*
- *that giving credit “should not impinge upon...the integrity of qualification outcomes”.*

This Fact Sheet should be read in conjunction with the TAC Fact Sheet: [Training Product Equivalence](#) and the TAC Fact Sheet: [Recognition of Prior Learning](#).

Awarding credit when a learner holds the current unit or module

Where a learner provides suitable evidence they have successfully completed a unit and/or module at any RTO, all RTOs must provide credit for that unit or module.

Before providing credit on the basis of a qualification, a Statement of Attainment and record of results, you should authenticate the information in the document (e.g. by contacting the organisation that issued the document and confirming its authenticity or checking the information on the [Unique Student Identifier](#) (USI website).

In some cases, licensing or regulatory requirements may prevent a unit or module being awarded through a credit process.

Equivalence of Training Products

When Training Package or accredited course developers determine equivalence, they conduct an analysis of the new unit and/or module and the one it immediately supersedes. This determination does not consider the unit and/or module from versions superseded twice or more i.e. does not review historical versions.

Awarding credit when successive versions are “Equivalent”?

RTOs can automatically award credit using the ‘equivalent’ determination where the unit and/or module attained by the learner **immediately precedes** the unit and/or module for which credit will be awarded.

As the determination of ‘equivalence’ is based on unchanged workplace outcomes, it is reasonable to allow for an immediately equivalent superseded unit and/or module to be used to grant credit automatically.

Awarding credit when equivalent units or modules have been superseded twice or more

Where a learner seeks credit for equivalent units and/or modules that have been superseded twice or more (e.g. there is a unit or module interceding), the RTO must conduct a mapping process to confirm no gaps exist in the content and learning outcomes (which includes a review of the Elements, Performance Criteria and Assessment Requirements in the unit) between the unit and/or module attained by the learner and the unit and/or module for which the learner seeks credit. This mapping ensures that every requirement of the current unit or module is evident in the unit and/or module for which credit is sought.

The mapping process may reveal that there have been no changes in substance between equivalent units superseded twice or more and with that knowledge, the RTO could safely grant credit. It may also reveal that there have been substantial changes. Where a mapping process identifies gaps in the content and learning outcomes, no award of credit can be provided, in which case the RTO may offer recognition of prior learning (RPL) or an accelerated delivery pathway so that learners can upgrade to the current unit.

An example of a mapping process is available in the TAC Fact Sheet: [Training Product Equivalence](#).

The importance of mapping – quality and integrity of outcomes

A recent review of a sample of units from 45 national training packages examined whether there were significant gaps between the current unit and a previous version of the unit where it had been superseded twice or more. The review found that:

- for the majority of units reviewed, 64% (29 out of the 45) revealed that there were significant gaps along the equivalence chain;
- changes included additional performance criteria and additional knowledge evidence relating to safe work practices, which may have implications for workplace safety;
- the evidence from the sample reviewed indicated that it would be unsafe to presume that equivalent units that have been superseded twice or more could automatically be used for credit; and
- this evidence demonstrates the importance of RTOs to map equivalent units superseded twice or more against the current unit before credit can be considered.

Examples of a comparison of equivalent units of competency superseded twice or more with an earlier version of the unit is provided below:

RIIMPO318F Conduct civil construction skid steer loader operations

RIIMPO318F is the current version (Release 1: 2021) of a string of equivalent units: RIIMPO318E (2018) – RIIMPO318D (2015) – RIIMPO318B (2013) – RIIMPO318A (2011).

Comparing RIIMPO318F (Release 1 2021) with RIIMPO318B (2013) reveals considerable gaps in the performance criteria, most notably relating to “safe work practices”, emergency procedures, managing and reporting hazards, communication with others, and completing documentation. The increased focus on safety and on operation of the equipment means that the assumption that achievement of a past equivalent unit could be used as credit for the current version of the unit could be unsafe.

FWPWPP2213 Cut panels

FWPWPP2213 is the current version (2020) of a string of superseded equivalent units: FWPWPP2201 (2016) – FWPWPP2201B (2011) – FWPWPP2201A (2010).

Comparing FWPWPP2213 (2020) with FWPWPP2201B (2011) reveals significant changes between the two versions. There is missing or changed performance criteria related to confirming safety requirements, mitigating risks, PPE, and workplace safety procedures, operational safety, and serviceability and faults. The missing knowledge evidence related to workplace safety requirements and PPE, as did the assessment conditions.

If a judgement was made to allow credit for FWPWPP2213 Cut panels on the basis of FWPWPP2201B, serious risks could be involved.

ITCWEB513 Build dynamic websites

ITCWEB513 is the current version (2020) of a string of equivalent units: ICTWEB501 (2015) – ICAWEB501A (2011) – ICAA5141C (2010) – ICAA5141B (2010). Details of the last of this series is not available on TGA.

Comparing ITCWEB513 (2020) with ICAA5141C (2010) reveals almost no common content, yet the chain of equivalence is unbroken. It is not surprising that in this industry of rapid change there are major differences in the methodology and terminology of the units of competency.

Responsibilities under the Australian Qualifications Framework

When awarding credit, RTOs need to consider the requirements of the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) which indicates that RTOs are responsible for ensuring the quality of the learning outcomes and that the graduate has satisfactorily completed any requirements for the awarding of the qualification.

The AQF Pathways Policy also indicates that:

- the RTO will 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 of the qualification; and
- that giving credit “should not impinge upon...the integrity of qualification outcomes”.

When unit or module information is no longer available

There are instances where the content of a previous version of a unit or module is no longer available on the national VET Register, training.gov.au.

For example, consider the unit *CPCBC4008 Supervise site communication and administration processes for building and construction projects* (as detailed in the TAC Fact Sheet: [Training Product Equivalence](#)) and go back two versions to CPCBC4008A (Release 1). This unit is listed on training.gov.au, but the content of the unit can no longer be accessed. The mapping contained in the Companion Volume for this training product indicates that CPCBC4008A is equivalent to CPCBC4008B. And in the next release of the training package, CPCBC4008B is equivalent to the current unit CPCBC4008.

As an RTO has no way of knowing the content of CPCBC4008A, or what differences or similarities exist between this unit and the other two superseding versions of the unit, it would not be reasonable to grant credit in this situation as no mapping or evidence could be sourced.

When versions are “Not Equivalent”

Credit cannot be awarded when versions of units or modules are not equivalent, however the RTO could undertake an RPL process with the learner. 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. The TAC Fact Sheet: [Recognition of Prior Learning](#) assists in interpreting the requirements of Clauses 1.8 and 1.12 (assessment).

Determining the vocational competency of trainers and assessors

RTOs are required to demonstrate their nominated trainers and assessors are vocationally competent and current in accordance with Clause 1.13 of the Standards for RTOs. This means that the trainers and assessors hold the unit they deliver and assess or are able to prove that they have equivalent competence.

Evidence used to demonstrate equivalence of vocational competency may include relevant past training (including superseded and pre-existing industry qualifications), experience and professional development. The TAC Fact Sheet: [Vocational Competence and Industry Currency](#) assists in interpreting the requirements of Clause 1.13a.

What are auditors looking for?

When equivalence is part of a decision about credit, RPL and vocational competence, an RTO must provide evidence of mapping indicating how judgement and decisions occurred within each process.

An overview of the decision process for Credit

The following flow chart provides guidance on key questions that must be considered by the RTO when awarding credit.

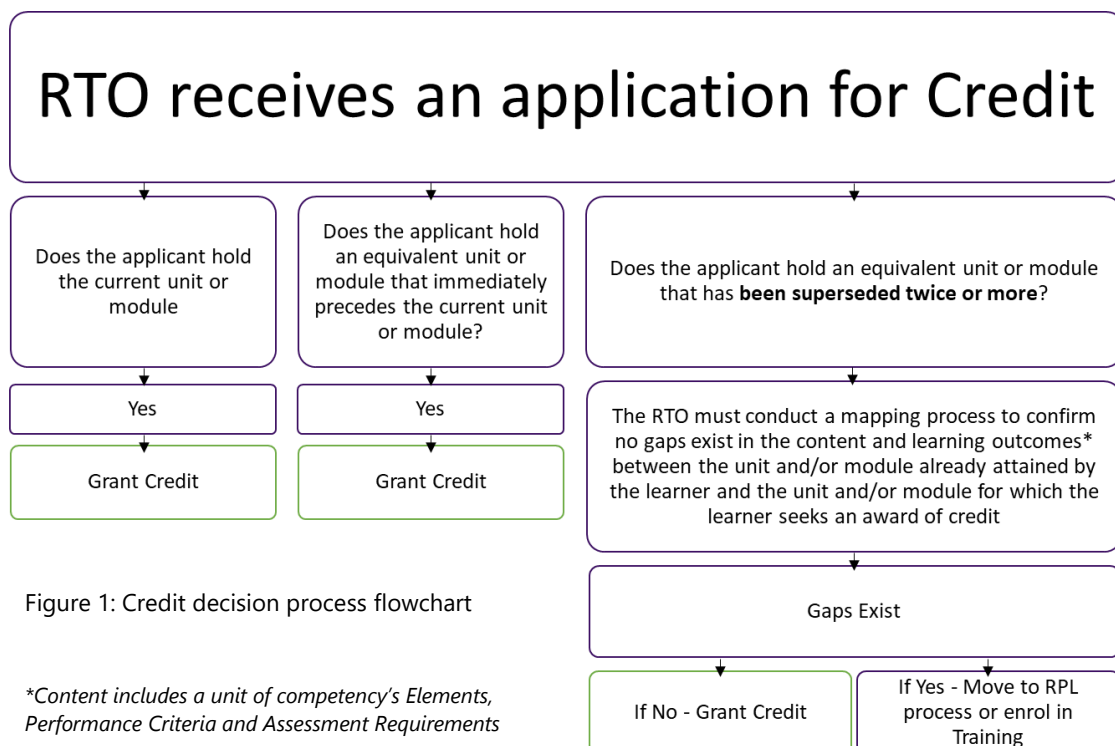


Figure 1: Credit decision process flowchart

Frequently Asked Questions:

Can I award credit for an equivalent unit when that unit's pre-requisites have changed or are not equivalent?

RTOs can award credit where a Training Package or accredited course developers have determined equivalence where the unit and/or modules already attained by the learner immediately precedes the unit and/or module for which credit transfer will be awarded, this is regardless of any pre-requisite conditions⁶.

What happens if the new unit is equivalent to a unit from a different training package?

As long as the unit already attained by the student immediately precedes the unit and/or module for which credit transfer will be awarded, and it is indicated on the National Register that it is equivalent, credit can be awarded. An example of this is *FNSAAC421 Prepare Financial Reports* which immediately precedes and is equivalent to the unit *BSBFIA401 Prepare Financial Reports*.

Do I still provide credit if the transcript provided by the student indicates that the unit they currently hold was obtained through a credit transfer process?

Credit can be awarded to the student, as long as the unit already attained by the student immediately precedes the unit and/or module for which credit transfer will be awarded, this is regardless of the method the student attained that unit.

⁶ In some cases, licensing or regulatory requirements may prevent a unit or module being awarded through a credit process.