



# Educational Pathways Policy - VET

**Policy Code:** ACA-011**Version:** 15.0**Effective Date:** 3 June 2020

## Purpose

This policy is intended to provide a broad framework, set of principles and minimal requirements for determining and granting advanced standing and to promote understanding by all students of the requirements for application of advanced standing into the College's Vocational Education and Training (VET) courses.

**Definition of "College"** – *The Australian College of Natural Medicine Pty Ltd (ACNM) trades as Endeavour College of Natural Health and FIAFitnation. For the purpose of this policy, any reference to 'College' or 'the College' should be considered a reference to each or any of these respective trading names / entities.*

## Scope

- All campuses and courses
- All students seeking advanced standing or exemption from specified units of competency or units of study within a particular course
- All staff, decision-making bodies, agents and partners of the College

## Acronyms

**AQF:** Australian Qualification Framework - The national policy for regulated qualifications in Australian education and training. It incorporates the qualifications from each education and training sector into a single comprehensive national qualifications framework.

**CT:** Credit Transfer - The process providing students with advanced standing based on equivalence in content, skills, knowledge and assessment criteria between matched qualifications.

**RCC:** Recognition of Current Competency – The assessment of a person's current capacity to perform; it applies if an individual has previously successfully completed the requirements for a unit of competency or a module and is now required to be reassessed to ensure that the competence is being maintained.

**RPL:** Recognition of Prior Learning - the acknowledgement of a person's skills and knowledge acquired through previous training, work or life experience, which may be used to grant status or advanced standing in a subject or module. It can lead to a full qualification in the VET sector.

**RTO:** Registered Training Organisation - A registered provider and assessor of nationally recognised training under the VET scheme.

**VET:** Vocational Education and Training - Formal, accredited post compulsory education designed to develop knowledge, skills and attributes of a vocational nature. Training is provided by registered training organisations.



## Policy Statement

The College encourages lifelong learning and provides the opportunity for students to have previous learning recognised for advanced standing in their courses (including formal, informal and non-formal learning as defined in the definitions section at the end of this document). The provision of advanced standing for these activities both enables and encourages individuals to enter into, and / or continue with, formal education or training by giving recognition to and avoiding duplication of, relevant previous learning. It also supports equity and fairness in access to, and participation in, education and training.

Previous learning must be assessed as equivalent to the College's units of study and / or units of competency for advanced standing to be granted. Assessment of prior learning will take into account the units of study, units of competency, volume of learning, program of study, including content, and the learning and assessment approaches of the previous learning and / or work and life experience.

## Course requirements

Regardless of the nature or amount of advanced standing recognised, any specific requirements of an award must be fulfilled, including conditions associated with the professional recognition of the award (e.g. online / distance study restrictions or a requirement to complete a certain number of practical clinic hours).

## Current Skills and Knowledge

The previous knowledge and skills of an applicant must still be current, in the context of the course to which the student has been admitted, in order for advanced standing recognition to be approved. Only previous learning that has been maintained within the past three years has the potential under this policy to be recognised for advanced standing.

In addition, potential for advanced standing may be governed by regulatory or professional body requirements. Applications in those disciplines where the body of knowledge and practice has changed significantly and the applicant has not maintained sustained practice within the field of study may be rejected by the Pathway Assessor.

## Knowledge and Skill Assessment

The *Educational Pathways Policy - VET* aims to optimise student progression through award courses by recognising prior units of competency as the basis for satisfying some course requirements. Advanced standing may be assessed on formal, non-formal and / or informal learning.

The VET Advisory Board may, at its discretion but subject to the requirements of any formal advanced standing recognition arrangements, set additional requirements, such as application interview, competency conversation, equivalency testing or portfolio submission, for the process of recognising advanced standing for a particular course or subject.

## Advanced Standing Recognition Limits

Advanced standing arrangements for students towards AQF qualifications at any level will take into account the comparability and equivalence of the:

- units of competency
- learning outcomes
- volume of learning
- program of study, including content
- learning and assessment approaches



## VET Advanced Standing Limits

The maximum RPL for a VET qualification is 100%. This is referred to as RPL for whole qualification and generally incurs fees (see the relevant fee and payment options for your course on the relevant College website).

## Forms of Advanced Standing

Advanced standing outcomes are expressed as block credit, specified credit or unspecified credit. In most cases the College VET programs are specified credit as they relate to required competencies within a qualification. Unspecified credit relates to elective competencies that may be added to a package by an RTO. Block credit is not relevant as we do not give advanced standing by study period; it is given by units of study and / or competency.

## Advanced Standing for Exemptions

Advanced standing will only be given for subjects for whom a grade of Credit Transfer (CT) or Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) has been noted on the transcript when sufficient evidence has been supplied to indicate the previous exemptions.

## Automatic Advanced Standing Recognition

### Internal Course Transfer

Internal transfer advanced standing will automatically be recognised where the competency code and title, are identical in each course. In this case the grade will be published on the course competency transcript.

In all other cases, recognition of advanced standing is not automatic and an application for advanced standing recognition must be made.

### (Credit) Pathways Defined

Type of Learning Undertaken	VET Pathway Application
Non formal, informal learning and / or formal learning completed more than three years ago.	RPL
Formal Learning – VET completed within the last three years	Credit Transfer VET to VET
Formal Learning - HE completed within the last three years	Credit Transfer HE to VET

## Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) - VET

RPL is the assessment of skills or knowledge required for entry to, or advanced standing towards, a qualification, where there are no formal qualifications as proof or qualification was completed more than three years ago. RPL will be available only where it is suitable and appropriate to a specific award course and only where a student's previous non-formal or informal learning has taken place within the last three years, and is assessed as having met the skills and knowledge required for satisfactory completion of a unit/s of study, and or unit of competency within the relevant course.

This process as outlined in the *RPL Procedure – VET* is individualised to reflect specific student needs / experiences. The student must supply appropriate documentation as outlined in the:

- *VET Student RPL Application Kit – Part A*
- *VET Student RPL Application Kit – Part B*



## Credit Transfer

Applications for advanced standing based solely on formal education must be within a timeframe such that the content of the acquired skills and knowledge are current. Therefore, only study completed within the past three years may be considered for advanced standing towards VET units of competency.

Applications in those disciplines where the body of knowledge and practice has changed significantly and the applicant has not maintained sustained practice within the field of study may be rejected by the Pathway Assessor.

### Credit Transfer - VET to VET

Credit transfer in the VET sector refers to the granting of status or advanced standing by an RTO to students for units of study or units of competency completed at the same or another RTO. Recognition of Current Competency (RCC) is the assessment of an individual's current capacity to perform. It applies if the individual has successfully completed the requirements for a unit of competency or a unit of study and is now required to be reassessed to ensure that skills and knowledge have been maintained. The College defines currency of skills and knowledge to those having been obtained within the last three years, applications for advanced standing within this period would be assessed via Credit Transfer. Those outside the three year period would be assessed via the RPL process. Credit transfer may be available in conjunction with RPL.

This process is initiated by the student and credit transfer evaluation is conducted by a Pathway Assessor on an individual basis. The student must supply appropriate documentation as outlined in the *Credit Transfer VET to VET Application Form*.

### Credit Transfer - HE to VET

Education pathways from HE to VET are designed to address the need for the student to develop new skills. The College has set guidelines for this process based on the ability to align HE learning outcomes to required elements for each VET unit of competency in the same or related field.

This process is initiated by the student and credit transfer evaluation is conducted by a Pathway Assessor on an individual basis. The student may be required to undertake a practical and / or written skills assessment; this process attracts a fee. The student must supply appropriate documentation as outlined in the *Credit Transfer Higher Education to VET Application Form*.

## Fees and Refunds

Fees will be incurred for all RPL applications (see the relevant fee and payment options for your course on the relevant College website). Whether the student is successful or not successful in their RPL application no refund of fees will be granted.

HE to VET applications where the student is required to undertake a practical and / or written assessment may incur a fee, this fee will be determined based on the number of units of competency under the application and assessment requirements; no refund of these fees will be granted.

## Responsibilities

**The College Council** is responsible for ensuring this Policy and associated procedures or guidelines are consistent with sectoral norms and requirements, and for approval of any major amendments to this Policy.

**The VET Advisory Board** is responsible for ensuring and overseeing the development of procedures or guidelines consistent with this Policy, including validating and monitoring assessment processes and outcomes related to VET to VET credit transfer.

**The National Educational Pathways Manager** is responsible for ensuring implementation of this Policy and its associated procedures and guidelines within the relevant Departments and making final decisions on the conferral



of educational pathways to individual applicants for course advanced standing in relation to courses offered or administered by the Departments.

**The Quality and Compliance team** is responsible for ensuring that this Policy, related processes, applicable forms and associated documentation are publicly available.

**Pathway Assessors** are responsible for conducting the evaluation of all applications for advanced standing under this Policy. The assessors are assigned by the National Educational Pathways Manager and must have expertise in the subject, content or skills area, as well as knowledge of and expertise in advanced standing assessment and the Educational Pathways policies and procedures.

**Students** are responsible for obtaining the appropriate forms from the website, and for filling them out correctly, and collecting, organising and supplying the appropriate documentary evidence as outlined in the appropriate application directions. Additionally, if academic transcripts or other evidence are supplied in a previous name, students must supply certified copies of documentary evidence of change of name.

## Application

Application for VET educational pathway advanced standing must be made at least 20 days prior to census date of the relevant subject or unit of study to permit processing, decision making and communication of the result to the student. Applicants are advised to consult with an Admissions Adviser as they must be an enrolled or provisionally enrolled student before supplying their application.

All applications must follow the relevant Educational Pathways procedure.

## Successful Application

All successful educational pathway applicants will have 'CT' (Credit Transfer) or 'RPL' (Recognition of Prior Learning) applied to the unit/s of study, unit/s of competency or VET qualification on their transcript on receipt of a signed acceptance of the outcome from student.

## Unsuccessful Application

If an application for an educational pathway advanced standing is rejected, the assessor must provide a response stating the grounds on which advanced standing for the unit/s of study, unit/s of competency or VET qualification was not approved. Grounds for rejection may include the following:

1. Application does not meet one or more of the criteria outlined above;
2. The qualification is not recognised;
3. The unit/s of study, unit/s of competency or VET qualification was completed outside the timeframes set by the VET Advisory Board.

Unsuccessful educational pathway applicants will be notified in writing of the reason why advanced standing was not granted. If an application for advanced standing has been rejected the student may access the [Grievance Policy – VET](#) to appeal the decision.

## Review and Quality Improvement

The College will measure the impact of this Policy through key performance indicators (KPIs) which may include:

- implementation of review systems, including benchmarking processes to compare advanced standing outcomes;
- targets and numbers of cross provider institutional arrangements;
- targets and numbers of successful Educational Pathway applications;
- establishment of specific goals / targets for increasing the numbers of students granted advanced standing.



This policy will be continually reviewed to maximise the applicability to new and updated qualifications and to student and industry needs. A formal review of this policy will be conducted at regular intervals in line with the College's *Policy Development and Review Policy*.

## Definitions

**Advanced Standing** – Advanced standing is a form of credit for any previous learning. See also articulation, credit transfer, recognition of prior learning.

**Block Credit** – is credit granted towards whole stages or components of a qualification.

**Course** – a structural program of learning built around a range of specific learning outcomes or units of competency, usually delivered in or by an educational training institution through an approved curriculum.

**Credit transfer** – is a process that provides students with agreed and consistent advanced standing outcomes based on identified equivalence in content learning outcomes, skills, knowledge and assessment criteria between matched qualifications.

**Educational Pathway** – allows students to move between two cognate courses, and throughout qualification levels with full or partial recognition of the qualifications and / or learning outcomes and / or units of competency they have achieved.

**Equivalency test** – is a test to measure the extent to which a person's existing knowledge or skills satisfy the requirements of an education or training program.

**Formal learning** – refers to learning that takes place through a structured program of learning and assessment that leads to the full or partial attainment of a recognised AQF qualification or other formally recognised qualification.

**Informal learning** – refers to learning that occurs through experience of work-related, social, family, hobby or leisure activities. Unlike formal and non-formal learning, informal learning is not organised or externally structured in terms of objectives, time or learning support.

**Learning Outcomes** – statements that specify what students will know, be able to do or be able to demonstrate when they have completed or participated in a subject and / or course. Outcomes are usually expressed as knowledge, skills, attitudes or values.

**Module** – is a self-contained block of learning which can be completed on its own or as part of a course and which may also result in the attainment of one or more units of competency.

**Non-formal learning** – learning that takes place through a program of instruction but does not usually lead to the attainment of a formal qualification or award, for example, in-house professional development programs conducted in the workplace.

**Qualification** – formal certification, issued by a relevant approved body, in recognition that a person has achieved learning outcomes or competencies.

**Specified Credit** – is advanced standing granted towards core and / or specific components in a qualification.

**Student** – is an individual person who is formally enrolled to study at the College. The individual person is that who appears on the College's documents such as enrolment, admission and payment documents, and who is assigned an individual student ID.





**Unit of Competency** - is the specification of knowledge and skill, and the application of that knowledge and skill, to the standard of performance expected in the workplace. A unit of competency is the smallest unit that can be assessed and recognised.

**Unit of Study** – is one or more units of competency combined in to one learning program.

**Unspecified Credit** – is advanced standing granted towards elective components in a qualification.

## Related Procedures

*Credit Transfer Procedure - VET to VET*

*Informal Articulation Procedure*

*RPL Procedure - VET*



## Further Information

### Related Policies

- Assessment Policy - VET*
- Grievance Policy – VET*
- Policy Development and Review Policy*

### Related Documents

- Credit Transfer Higher Education to VET Application Form*
- Credit Transfer VET to VET Application Form*
- VET Student RPL Application Kit – Part A*
- VET Student RPL Application Kit – Part B*
- VET Student RPL Kit Personal Statement Form*
- VET Student RPL Kit Portfolio Cover Page*
- VET Student RPL Kit Third Party Reports*

### Guidelines

Not Applicable

### Benchmarking

[AQF Qualifications Pathway Policy](#)

### Supporting Research and Analysis

- [Analysis of the AQF National Policy and Guidelines on Credit Arrangements.](#)
- [Building Better Connected Learning Through Improved Student Pathways – Pathways Project Report – November 2009](#)
- [Impact Analysis of the proposed strengthened Australian Qualifications Framework - Conducted for the Australian Qualifications Framework Council \(AQFC\) – October 2010](#)

### Related Legislation

[Australian Quality Framework \(AQF\) Second Edition Jan 2013](#)

## Review and Approval

### Policy Author

National Educational Pathways Manager

### Policy Owner

National Educational Pathways Manager





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## Contact

National Educational Pathways Manager

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## Recommending Body

VET Advisory Board

Meeting date: 20 November 2012

## Approval Body

College Council

Meeting date: 7 December 2012

## Policy Status

Revised

## Responsibilities for Implementation

- General Manager, VET
- National Educational Pathways Manager
- Pathway Assessors
- VET Advisory Board

## Key Stakeholders

- Admissions team
- Academic Council
- National Educational Pathways Manager
- General Manager, VET
- Quality & Compliance team
- Trainers and Assessors
- Student Services team
- VET Advisory Board
- VET students and potential students