



## Teaching Quality Handbook

### Part 7

# Credit Accumulation and Transfer System (CATS)

(June 2017)

Part 7 outlines the procedures for the award of credit from the completion of academic study, prior learning and previous experiences.

#### Version Control

Version	Created by	Date approved by Academic Board	Summary of changes
June 2017	Asst Registrar QAE	17/07/2017	Changes to reflect organisational restructuring

## Part 7: Credit Accumulation and Transfer System

### 1. Introduction

The RAU awards credits for the successful completion of module assessments and for the achievement of specified module outcomes. The former would normally be the case for students registered on an academic programme validated by the University, whilst the latter may apply to credits awarded for prior certificated and/or experiential learning as part of a 'special admissions' arrangement, often with advanced standing, onto an approved programme of study.

### 2. RAU Credit Framework

2.1. Credits will be awarded at one of four academic levels as follows:

Level 4	First year undergraduate / higher education certificate
Level 5	Second year undergraduate / higher education diploma / Foundation Degree
Level 6	Final year undergraduate / Honours degree
Level 7	Taught Master's degree

2.2. Levels 4 to 7 above are directly related to the current HE framework contained in the [QAA Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland](#).

2.3. Credit is awarded on the basis of ONE credit for every TEN hours of student learning activity. Such activity will include timetabled class activities, assessment and the student's own private study time within a defined subject area.

2.4. Full-time students will normally be registered for, and expected to achieve, 120 credits in each academic year although it is possible to register for up to 150 credits and, subject to timetabling arrangements, for up to 135 credits to be awarded in one academic year.

2.5. It is not normally possible for a student to progress to the next academic level until they have achieved the full 120 credits at the immediately preceding level. However, in exceptional cases, a student may be allowed to trail one 15 credit module onto the next level. See the Academic Regulations available from the [RAU website](#) for full details of the requirements for trailing modules.

2.6. To be eligible for an award of the RAU, students will be required to achieve the minimum credit requirements as detailed in Table 1 below.

2.7. All credits awarded will be added to a student's personal study record. These may be transferred between comparable programmes, both at

the University and other Higher Education Institutions, subject to normal Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) procedures. Once awarded, credits will remain on the student's record until their registration at the University is completed (either on successful completion of the programme or on transfer to another establishment).

**Table 1: Minimum credit requirements for RAU awards**

Award	Academic level of award	Minimum credit requirements	Minimum credit at the award level	Maximum permissible credit by APL/APEL #
Certificate of Higher Education	4	120	120 @ Level 4	80 @ Level 4
Diploma of Higher Education	5	240	120 @ Level 5	160 of which no more than 60 @ Level 5
Foundation Degree	5	240	120 @ Level 5	160 of which no more than 60 @ Level 5 *
BSc/BA Degree	6	300	60 @ Level 6	240 at Levels 4 & 5 only
BSc/BA Honours Degree	6	360	120 @ Level 6	240 of which no more than 60 @ Level 6 *
BSc Honours (Intercalating Programmes)	6	360	90 @ Level 6	240 at Levels 4 & 5 only
Graduate Certificate	6	60	37.5 @ Level 6	40 @ Level 6
Graduate Diploma	6	120	75 @ Level 6	80 @ Level 6
Professional Adaptation Award	7	45	45 @ Level 7	N/A
Integrated Masters Degree	6	480	120 @ Level 7	320 of which no more than 60 @ Level 7 *
Postgraduate Certificate	7	60	60 @ Level 7	40 @ Level 7
Postgraduate Diploma	7	120	90 @ Level 7	80 @ Level 7
Masters Degree MA/MSc/MBA	7	180	150 @ Level 7, to include the Masters Dissertation	120 @ Level 7 *

# Within these allowances, a maximum of 50% of the total may be claimed and awarded from prior experiential learning (APEL)

\* No credits from prior learning, either APL or APEL, may contribute towards any personal research or dissertation modules

### **3. Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) and Prior Experiential Learning (APEL)**

- 3.1. The Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) and the Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) enables the University to award credit in respect of one or more modules at any academic level, providing the candidate can demonstrate achievement of the relevant learning outcomes.
- 3.2. APL credits are awarded on the basis of a portfolio of evidence, provided by the candidate, based on previous studies in a directly relevant subject area. The portfolio will normally contain a transcript of the subjects previously studied, a description of the content of the programme of study undertaken and a certificate confirming the successful completion of module(s)/programme. Credit would not normally be awarded where such certificated learning is more than 10 years prior to registration on an RAU programme.
- 3.3. APEL credits are awarded on the basis of a portfolio of evidence, provided by the candidate, demonstrating the achievement of specific learning outcomes through experience and practice. The portfolio will normally contain an account of the student's experiences and a reflective analysis of how this experience demonstrates the successful achievement of specific module learning outcomes. Credit would not normally be awarded where such experiential learning took place more than 10 years prior to registration on the programme, and where no evidence is produced to indicate maintenance or currency of knowledge.
- 3.4. The process for the award of credit by APL or APEL requires the completion of a [Special Applications Procedure \(SAP\) form](#) and an [APL application](#) from Registry and confirmation, from the relevant Module Leader and Programme Manager, that the evidence submitted supports the claim for the achievement of the module outcomes at the appropriate level and the award of credit. In all cases, Registry staff will ensure appropriate credits are awarded in recognition of the claims made.
- 3.5. APL and APEL credits do not carry a numeric mark. In such cases, the student's average score for the year will be based on the average of any remaining modules.
- 3.6. The maximum credit which can be accepted from prior learning, whether APL or APEL credits, or both, will normally be two thirds of the total credits required for the academic award of the University. Within this total, no more than 50% can be awarded for Prior Experiential Learning (APEL). The detailed requirements for each award are shown in Table 1 above. Credit cannot be awarded through either APL or

APEL towards the credits required for an RAU dissertation or personal research project.

- 3.7. Any costs associated with the award of credit through APL or APEL will be borne by the student and will normally be equivalent to the fees payable by the student for the module(s) for which credit is sought. Where significant credit is claimed, the fees charged may be reduced at the discretion of the University.

#### **4. European Credit Transfer Scheme (ECTS)**

- 4.1 The European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) is a student-centred system based on the student workload required to achieve the learning outcomes and competences of a programme of study and to facilitate the transfer of such credit across HE institutions within Europe. Further information about the ECTS system can be found at [European Commission Education and Training](#)
- 4.2 The University currently does not award ECTS credits, however it is aware of the requirements for ECTS credit transfer and could establish a dual system if required to satisfy transfer of credit between any EU partner institution.
- 4.3 Under ECTS, a full-time student workload is set at 60 credits for each academic year. Credit is awarded on the same basis as the UK CATS system, i.e. for the demonstrated achievement of specified module outcomes.
- 4.4 A grading system is used to enable the transfer of marks across various institutions, based on a normal distribution of pass marks within a module group. The grading system is:  
A = best 10%  
B = next 25%  
C = next 30%  
D = next 25%  
E = next 10%
- Fail grades are classified as either FX (some more work to do to pass) or F (considerable work required).
- 4.5 The grading system assumes a similar profile would be achieved at all institutions, and enables a receiving institution to award marks in relation to the profile of its own students.

## 5. The Diploma Supplement

The Diploma Supplement is a document attached to a higher education qualification aimed at improving international 'transparency' and at facilitating the academic and professional recognition of qualifications (diplomas, degrees, certificates, etc.). It is designed to provide a description of the nature, level, context, content and status of the studies that were successfully completed by the individual named on the original qualification to which this supplement is appended. European HE institutions are expected to provide a Diploma Supplement to all graduates from 2005 onwards. Further information on the Diploma Supplement can be obtained from the [European Commission Education and Training website](#)