Credit/Exemption Policy

Applicants seeking credit and/or exemption should read this policy carefully as it has changed recently.

This policy should be read in conjunction with University Council Statutes 5.4.4 and Statute 5.4.5 and is not intended in any way as a substitute for Council approved Statutes, and should be read in whole as the credit/exemption policy for postgraduate courses of the School of Population Health. The principles contained herein relating to ‘Academic Levels’ (point 9) are those articulated as a result of the Masters by Coursework Review process (2003). Statutes can be viewed at http://www.unimelb.edu.au/ExecServ/Statutes/.

1. Background
   This credit policy outlines the principles that apply to students seeking credit for subject(s) in one of the School of Population Health’s postgraduate courses. The School of Population Health determines eligibility for credit only after selection into a course. Students are required to apply formally in writing and provide detailed information (point 19) to enable the School to assess their credit status.

2. Entry Requirements
   All applicants are required to meet the formal entry requirements of courses before they will be allowed to enroll, and before any credit can be awarded.

3. Definition of Credit
   Credit may be awarded for subjects within a postgraduate program on the basis of the prior completion of subjects within the parameters of this policy. Credit should not be confused with ‘advanced standing’ (see point 5) which is currently available to students entering, for example, the Master of Public Health, and is governed by the selection regulations of that course.

   Credit refers to the approved accreditation of subjects (specified or unspecified), with associated credit points, toward a degree/program of study (e.g. the Master of Public Health), on the basis of approved recognized prior studies (at an equivalent level) that reduces the amount of credit points required for the completion of the current course to which the student has been admitted and for which the credit applies (i.e. usually it reduces the length of a course by the amount of credit points accredited).

4. Definition of Exemption
   An exemption refers to the waiving of the requirement to complete a particular subject on the basis of a student having completed an equivalent subject in an award course which has been successfully completed. This means that the student does not need to do that particular subject(s) and must complete an alternative approved subject. The awarding of exemption(s) does not decrease the points value or length of a course. The subject must be of the same academic level (see point 9), and deemed equivalent by the course coordinator. Exemptions normally only relate to core subjects or pre-requisite requirements.

5. Definition of Advanced Standing
   Advanced Standing is approved credit status in a course that reduces the length of the total course, on the basis of approved studies or recognized work experience, etc, and/or may entitle the student to enter the course at an advanced level. For example, in the Master of Public Health, students may be admitted via different entry pathways, on the basis of completion of a minimum two years work experience in a health related field or have a health related degree; similarly students may be admitted to a 100 or 150 point Master of Social Health on the basis of the level of prior studies and/or other specified entry criteria (please refer to specific Course entry criteria requirements for detail).

6. Time Limitation
   Credit is not normally granted for studies undertaken more than 5 years prior to the year of admission to a School of Population Health postgraduate course.

7. Status of Creditable Subjects
   These principles apply to prior study undertaken within the University of Melbourne and at other recognized equivalent tertiary institutions.

   1. Credit will not be granted for subjects that are already credited towards an award course that the student has completed (as defined under point 8) (exceptions to this principle apply in relation to some School of Population Health courses - see point 23).
2. Credit will not be granted for subjects which have been completed at a different academic level to the subjects for which credit is sought (see point 9).
3. Credit will not be granted for research reports or theses.
4. Credit will not normally be granted for coursework subjects completed under the RTS Scheme.

8. Definition of a 'Completed Course'
A ‘completed course’ is defined by that point in time when final results for all the required subjects of a course are released to a student who has been enrolled in that course, and the student is deemed to have ‘completed’ all course requirements of that course and/or the student has ‘graduated’ and been awarded the course.

9. Academic Levels
For the purposes of granting credit and/or exemptions, postgraduate subjects at the University of Melbourne are classified by academic levels as follows:
- 100 - 300 level - Undergraduate, Graduate Diploma, Graduate Certificate
- 400 level - Postgraduate Diploma, Postgraduate Certificate
- 500 level - Masters Level
- 600 level - Doctoral Level
Credit cannot be transferred upwards between levels. For example, students may not gain credit for a 300 level subject towards a 400 or 500 level subject course. A Masters degree must contain at least 100 points of masters (500 level) subjects. Subjects completed at another recognized tertiary institution for which credit/exemption is sought shall be assessed using these academic levels as a guide to equivalency.

10. Maximum Amount of Credit
A student will not normally be granted more than 50% credit towards the coursework component of the course in which a student enrolls [see University Statute 5.4.4 (2)]. Students will not be granted credit for research reports, minor theses subjects or research project subjects.

11. Credit for Community Access Subjects
Students may be entitled to receive credit for successfully completed CAP subject(s) in an award course providing that:
- The student meets the entry requirements of the award course and is admitted;
- The subject is a recognised part of the award course, and was undertaken at the appropriate academic level.

12. Students Resuming a Discontinued SPH Degree (by Coursework)
Students who resume a discontinued degree do not need to apply for credit as the points accumulated within the previous ten years will still count once the degree is resumed. Resuming students need to be aware that credit points for subjects completed more than ten years prior to being readmitted cannot normally be counted towards the degree and these students may need to take additional subjects to complete their course requirements and to extend their degree accordingly.

13. Students Resuming After Suspension
Students who are suspended from a degree and gain subsequent approval to resume, may be credited with subjects undertaken whilst on suspension. These students need to apply for credit in line with SPH Procedures.

14. Maximum Time for Completion of a Degree
All students commencing a degree must complete their course within ten years, which includes any Leave of Absence periods. Credit points for a degree may only be accumulated for a maximum of ten years. Students enrolled beyond ten years will lose points as subjects taken early in the degree progressively exceed their credit date before degree completion.

15. Students Resuming a Degree after a Break (Termination or Abandonment)
Students who resume a degree that they had discontinued will be awarded credit where appropriate. Note that a ten year credit rule applies; all study contributing to a degree must be completed within a ten year time period.

16. Internal Transfer between Courses
Notwithstanding maximum credit restrictions (point 10), students seeking to transfer between two postgraduate courses offered at the same level in the School of Population Health may be awarded 100% credit for all successfully completed subjects from course A to course B (not including research reports, minor theses subjects or research project subjects), provided that:
• The student meets the entry requirements of course B and is admitted
• That the subject is a compulsory or recognised part of course B and was undertaken at the appropriate academic level

Notwithstanding any other principle as set out in this policy, students cannot transfer subject credits from one partially completed course to another course offered at a different level (except where course specific exceptions exist and have been approved as part of this policy – point 23).

17. Terminating (Conceded or Compensatory) Passes
The School of Population Health will not award credit for subjects in which a student has received a terminating (conceded or compensatory) pass (i.e. the student failed the subject but was granted a full pass in terms of credit points).

18. When is Credit and Prerequisite Status Determined?
Credit is formally calculated once a student has been admitted to a School of Population Health course.

19. How to Apply for Credit and Exemptions
An "Application for Credit/Exemption" form is available from the School of Population Health Academic Programs Office (or website: http://www.sph.unimelb.edu.au/postgrad/current/forms.html). Before submitting the application students should:
• Read this policy document carefully to ensure that the request falls within the guidelines of the School of Population Health Credit/Exemption Policy;
• Attach all necessary information, as specified below (point 19 Table 1);
• Attach a certified academic transcript of the subjects for which they are seeking credit, as well as a key to grades awarded on the transcript.

20. The Formalisation of Credit
The amount of credit to be awarded for previous studies will be decided by the School of Population Health in accordance with the School's credit policy. Students will be sent a letter advising them of the credit they have been awarded. This letter is generally sent within the semester in which the student applied for credit, in the year in which the student has been admitted to a School of Population Health postgraduate course. The credit that the student has been awarded will also be noted on their University of Melbourne academic record.

21. Accepting Credit
Students do not have to accept any or all of the credit that they are awarded. Students who do not wish to accept all of the credit that they have been awarded must advise the School of this decision in writing within their first year (full-time or part-time) of enrolment.

22. Appeal Procedure
Students may appeal in writing to the School of Population Health Postgraduate Studies Committee (PGSC) concerning any rejection of an application for credit/exemption. This Committee will make a recommendation to the Head of School.

23. Information Required for the Evaluation Credit
Generally the more information that can be provided for each subject to be assessed the better. The information that must be provided for each subject that has been completed for which you would like the credit status to be determined is as follows:

1. Total contact hours, with lectures, practicals and tutorial hours clearly specified, for the subject (we need to know the contact hours for each week and the number of contact weeks);
2. Level of the subject at the institution where it is taught (e.g. is it a first, second, or third year subject?);
3. Content of the subject (a weekly syllabus, in addition to the Handbook extract, would be extremely useful);
4. Credit points awarded for the completion of the subject at the institution where it is taught;
5. Information about the structure of the course in which the student was enrolled. In particular, information about the total number of points that a student had to complete in order to finish the course;
6. Assessment requirements for the subject;
7. For subjects undertaken overseas, the provision of an assessment of qualifications from the Commonwealth government's National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition (NOOSR), Department of Education, Science and Training, is useful.
24. **Studies Completed Overseas**  
The rules relating to the award of credit and exemptions, as outlined in this policy, will apply to studies completed overseas. All students will need to provide the information listed in point 19. Normally, students whose qualifications are recognized and deemed equivalent and suitable for entry for postgraduate study in Australia by the Commonwealth government’s National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition (NOOSR), Department of Education, Science and Training, are considered to be eligible for credit or exemption. Students whose qualifications fall outside these guidelines may be considered for credit or exemption on a case by case basis.

25. **Special Circumstances**  
Any student who believes that their circumstances are not covered by this policy may make a special written application for credit or exemption to the School of Population Health Postgraduate Studies Coordinator or Head of School.

26. **Complex Credit Issues**  
Any complex credit issues will be referred to the School of Population Health Postgraduate Studies Committee.

27. **Additional Course Specific Information/Exceptions**

27.1 **Biostatistics Courses**  
Students who complete a course from the tiered School of Population Health postgraduate biostatistics courses (postgraduate certificate, postgraduate diploma and masters) are normally granted 100% credit for subjects completed in the preceding tier in order to progress through the suite. It is usual for the formal awarding of the lower tier course(s) to be withheld to allow this progressive credit to accumulate.

27.2 **Postgraduate Diploma in Epidemiology (PDE) to Master of Public Health (MPH)**

a) Please note that students will *not* be granted credit for subjects from a completed Postgraduate Diploma in Epidemiology (PDE) (formerly the Graduate Diploma in Epidemiology and Biostatistics GDEB) towards the Master of Public Health. If a student completes a PDE and then enrolls in a MPH, they will normally be eligible for advanced standing in to the course, as well as exemptions for Statistics (505-101) and Epidemiology (505-102). PDE graduates will be expected to meet the particular requirements of the MPH - including completion of a requisite number of consortium subjects.

b) If a student wishes to transfer from the Postgraduate Diploma in Epidemiology (PDE) to the Master of Public Health, they may be credited an appropriate number of subjects from the PDE at the 400 level (*see point 9*), and will have to meet the particular course structure requirements of the MPH - including completion of a requisite number of consortium subjects, and a minimum of 100 points of 500 level subjects.

27.3 **Master of Public Health Applicants**

27.3.1 **Victorian Public Health Consortium Master of Public Health (MPH) Students**

Students enrolled in the MPH at any Victorian Public health Consortium University who are eligible for transfer to the University of Melbourne will be granted 100% credit for completed coursework subjects providing:

- Subjects were completed to a satisfactory academic standard (e.g. conceded passes will not be credited);
- Credited subjects do not exceed two thirds of the total course point requirement for that student (i.e. with or without advanced standing);
- Students meet the course requirement for completing a total of 100 points of 500 level subjects;
- the subjects credited are relevant to a cohesive course plan that adequately prepares the students for a research project.

Students will not be granted credit for the MPH research report.
27.3.2 Corporate Master of Public Health Students (Corporate Master of Public Health Consortium - CMPH)
Students may apply for 100% credit for subjects from the CMPH. (Please refer to the CMPH course description/handbook). Credit will not be granted for the Research Report.

27.4 Master of Public Health (MPH) to Doctor of Public Health (DPH)
Students may apply for up to 50% of coursework subjects from a completed Master of Public Health toward the first year of the Doctor of Public Health (normally the first year of the DPH is coursework). Note: students may be awarded exemptions instead of credit.