Department of Education, Science and Training

National Study to Improve Outcomes in Credit Transfer and Articulation from Vocational and Technical Education to Higher Education

Stage 2 Report – Case Studies

April 2006

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Acknowledgements

The case studies and vignettes within this report have been made possible only through the support and assistance provided by the organisations involved. This support and agreement to participate in the study stem from a recognition by these organisations of the importance of this project and from a desire to assist MCEETYA in further enhancing credit transfer and articulation initiatives. They have willingly shared their knowledge, experiences and perspectives in this area.

The project team has been assisted immeasurably in undertaking this research by the staff and students of each organisation. We would like both to acknowledge and to thank all persons who participated in the consultations for their time, interest and willingness to share information about their work or involvement in this area. The openness displayed both in discussions and in the provision of internal reports and working documentation has been greatly appreciated by the project team.

We wish to offer particular thanks to the key contacts in each of the principal case study sites for organising the site visits and ensuring access to key people and information.

A list of the key contacts and the people involved in the consultations is provided in Appendix A.
1 Introduction

In November 2005, the Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) acting on behalf of the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) commissioned PhillipsKPA to undertake a national study to improve outcomes in credit transfer and articulation from vocational and technical education (VTE) to higher education (HE). That study was undertaken by a project team comprising:

- Dr Sue Johnston – PhillipsKPA
- David Phillips KPA – Director of PhillipsKPA
- Peter Noonan – Peter Noonan Consulting
- Jane Carnegie – Jane Carnegie Consulting
- Associate Professor Barry Golding – University of Ballarat.

The aims of the study are to:

- describe current credit transfer and articulation practices from VTE to higher education and map the major existing approaches by which credit transfer and articulation occur
- evaluate the approaches to credit transfer and articulation against the Good Practice Principles adopted by MCEETYA in May 2005 and identify gaps and anomalies
- identify the current approaches which achieve the most appropriate outcomes in credit transfer and articulation for students and institutions as well as factors which contribute to an approach’s success and the barriers to its wider adoption
- make recommendations for change by institutions, providers and governments on ways to improve credit transfer and articulation.

The study was guided by the Working Party on Credit Transfer and Articulation established by the Joint Committee on Higher Education (JCHE). Membership of the Working Party is as follows:

- Lois Sparkes (Chair) – DEST
- Paul White – DEST
- Jill Vardy – DEST
- Judy Forsyth - AQFAB
- Dr Terry Stokes – Victoria DET
- Chris Whitton – ACT DEYFS
- Laurence Money – WA DES
- Andrew Rolfe (replacing Lynda Boland) – NSW DET
- Susan Young – SA DFEEST
- Bruce McCallum (relacing Ray Morley) – QUT
- Dr Josie Misko – NCVER
- Judy Petch – VTE Group DEST
- Martha Kinsman – TAFE Directors Australia
- Professor Peter Booth – AVCC
- Jenny Hayes – ACPET.
The study comprised a number of stages and interim reports leading to a Final Report. Background information, discussion of issues and case studies are contained in the Stage 1 and Stage 2 Reports which can be read as separate documents or in conjunction with the Final Report.

The **Stage 1 Report** provides useful background reading and an overview of the field. It includes:

- definitions
- a typology of credit transfer and articulation
- drivers for enhanced credit transfer
- an analysis of levels of credit transfer
- factors affecting credit transfer
- a literature review
- an overview of national and international developments.

An invitational workshop was held in February 2006 to provide input to the typology and to the analysis of issues as they were emerging for the first report.

This **Stage 2 Report** provides detailed insights into the practical implementation of credit transfer arrangements in a variety of settings. It contains seven major case studies and a series of shorter vignettes, together with an analysis of the key themes emerging from the case studies. The case studies were selected to illustrate a range of approaches to credit transfer. The major case studies in the Stage 2 Report are:

- Southbank Institute of TAFE with Griffith University and the Queensland University of Technology
- Edith Cowan University
- South Australia TAFE and the three SA universities
- University of Newcastle
- Swinburne University of Technology
- Blue Mountains Hotel Management School
- Nursing pathways at University of Wollongong, James Cook University and the University of Melbourne.

The **Final Report** draws together findings from the study and makes recommendations to improve credit transfer and articulation. It is based on a synthesis of all aspects of the study, including the literature review, case studies and overview of national and international developments, and also draws on the experience and prior research of the project team.

A consultation draft of the final report provided an opportunity for key stakeholders to comment on the findings and recommendations before they were finalised.
2 The Case Studies

2.1 Introduction

The literature review and the state/territory overview presented in the Stage 1 Report demonstrate the many and varied arrangements currently in place for credit transfer and articulation between VTE and higher education across Australia. There are indications that the development of pathways and collaboration between the sectors has continued to expand since the last major review of practice (Carnegie, 2000). The overview also identifies that, although models and approaches vary, there has been a trend towards developing more systematic models both within institution-to-institution partnerships and in multi-institutional arrangements.

Some of the significant shifts that appear to be emerging include:

- linking credit transfer and pathways to other policy imperatives – e.g. skill shortages and community building
- an increased emphasis on credit transfer in education policy in some jurisdictions e.g. Ministerial statements and policy reviews
- development of organisational structures, such as cross-sectoral committees, to support credit transfer with high-level sector representation to ensure implementation
- extension of multi-site agreements negotiated from TAFE to a number of universities or from a single university to a range of VTE providers
- increased use of structured credit transfer.

At the same time, the overview highlights the continuation of a range of differing models of practice, differing levels of credit for any one qualification and significant differences in acceptance and application of credit transfer and articulation from VTE to higher education among different institutions.

To provide further insight into these developments, this next stage of the project examines a range of these models in detail. The use of case studies is a common research tool applicable to projects of this type and can be an effective and accessible way of documenting and analysing policies and practices in real contexts. However, as noted in the literature review, case studies can quickly lose their relevance if the purpose is confined to being purely descriptive or information focused.

In conducting the case studies for this project, the objectives are to use the material gathered both to illustrate good practice and innovation and to analyse common issues and themes as a means of informing recommendations on strategic policy directions.

2.2 Identification of case study sites

The initial overview identified a large number of possible case study sites. Project practicalities are such that only a limited number of case studies is possible. Selection of the case studies should also be based on logical and defensible criteria. Non-selection should not be interpreted as a particular example of cross-sectoral collaboration being less worthy or less innovative than another.
A number of key selection criteria were used to identify case study sites. Critical factors include incorporating adequate examples of:

- geographical spread - city, regional, state / territory
- transferability – arrangements that include characteristics of relevance to other similar environments
- different models in practice – state-wide, dual sector, institutional partnerships, multi-institution arrangements.

Other diverse characteristics that need to be apparent within the case studies include:

- governance and management arrangements – level of governance (strategic, operational, local), policies and procedures, operational systems, data and information management
- breadth and depth of outcomes – number of agreements, number of students, student outcomes, institutional outcomes
- coverage of the typologies presented in the Stage 1 Report.

Based on these criteria, the following case study sites were put forward by the project team, approved by the JCHE Working Party on Credit Transfer and Articulation and confirmed with the relevant organisations.

**Case Study 1: Southbank Institute of TAFE (Qld)**

This case study illustrates partnerships initiated by a TAFE institute. Southbank Institute has made articulation central to its mission, is supported in this endeavour by State Government policy and has been recognised as a leader in this aspect of education. The case study explores the arrangement between Southbank Institute and two of its university partners – Griffith University and the Queensland University of Technology (QUT).

**Case Study 2: Edith Cowan University (WA)**

Edith Cowan University provides an example of a regional university that has forged strong links with the VTE sector in the form of credit transfer arrangements with both TAFEWA and private providers. It has involvement in educational precincts at Joondalup and Bunbury that encourage pathways from TAFE.

**Case Study 3: University of Newcastle (NSW)**

The arrangements between the University of Newcastle and its VTE partners provide a good example of a long-standing credit transfer model with a regional focus.

**Case Study 4: TAFE SA and South Australia’s Universities (SA)**

This case study explores the South Australian model involving agreements between the Department (DFEEST), TAFE SA and the three universities. It is the only state-wide system currently in operation and meets a range of other criteria.
Case Study 5: Swinburne University of Technology (Vic)

This organisation was selected as an example of a dual sector institution. It has a comprehensive range of internal pathways across different fields from its TAFE Division to the Higher Education within the University which encompass both undergraduate and graduate programs.

Case Study 6: Blue Mountains International Hotel Management School (NSW)

The Blue Mountains International Hotel Management School is an approved private higher education provider and a registered training organisation offering programs in hospitality and tourism. Although currently operating in NSW, it is also applying for recognition in the ACT. It has a partnership with the University of New England and offers a UNE award at the degree level as part of its articulated program structure.

Case Study 7: Pathways for Nursing at James Cook University, the University of Melbourne and the University of Wollongong

In addition to the six institutionally-based case studies listed above, this seventh case study was added to provide a focus on a particular industry. Nursing was chosen to illustrate credit transfer pathways between para-professional and professional courses in the two sectors and to determine if the current national focus on skill shortages in health was impacting on the development of new pathways in nursing.

These seven case studies provide a cross-section of current systems, models, practices and arrangements involving credit transfer and articulation across the country.

They are supplemented by a number of shorter, less detailed vignettes that illustrate similar or different approaches to key aspects of this investigation.

2.3 Case study methodology

The objectives of the case studies and vignettes are to:

- explore in detail specific models of credit transfer and articulation
- identify the features of these models that can be used to guide and enhance policy and practice
- establish the effectiveness of these arrangements and their relationship to the MCEETYA Principles and other national guidelines.

The case studies examine the different organisational approaches and different typologies in place, drawing out common features and those that are unique to a particular context.

The case study methodology included a mix of desk research and fieldwork. The desk research involved gathering and analysing key documentation from the participating organisations. This included material readily available through the web and, where feasible, internal data and reports that were made available to the project team. Such material included, but was not limited to:

- organisational strategic and operational plans
organisational policies and procedures
Memoranda of Understanding or similar agreements between organisations
documentation on organisational systems, such as committees to manage and implement policies
web-based and other publicity material made available to students
data on admissions with credit or articulated pathways
data on VTE student progression within HE
documentation on funding arrangements.

Information obtained from this process was used in the reports of each case study and for background material to contextualise the qualitative data gathered from the fieldwork. Consultations were undertaken at the participating organisations and included interviews and discussions with key individuals over a two or three-day site visit. In one or two of the case studies, it also involved observations of cross-sector committee meetings.

The consultations were organised through a key contact person at each site that formed the principal focus of the case study. Consultations took place with:

- senior management of the participating organisations
- staff with direct responsibilities for cross-sector arrangements including teaching and administrative and support staff located centrally and within relevant faculties
- teaching staff not directly involved to identify the broader level of awareness and support of existing arrangements
- students in the VTE organisation (interested in transferring to higher education)
- students with VTE background in the higher education organisation, to ascertain their experience and perceptions of the arrangements.

Appendix A contains a list of people consulted and the name of the key contact person at each case study site.

The consultations were conducted using a question-based instrument with answers noted by the project team member. A briefing paper outlining areas to be covered was distributed to the participants prior to the consultation. Because staff had different knowledge and perspectives of the arrangements, each interview focused on the area or aspect most relevant to that staff member’s role in the arrangements. Accordingly some interviews were broadly focused while some were narrow.

The interviews addressed the following areas:

- **background and context** – history, rationale, initiation, internal drivers, changes over time, local context
- **model/s being used** – typologies in use, terminology used
- **focus and extent** – data on arrangements: number of arrangements, parties involved, qualifications covered, fields of study, duration, numbers of students and types of students, scope of application
• data and information management - data collection, records management, promotion mechanisms, transparency of information

• governance and co-ordination - level of organisational priority and leadership, use and relevance of internal or external policies and procedures, responsibilities and processes for development, authorisation and implementation, monitoring and evaluation processes and levels

• funding arrangements - fee implications, funding structures in dual sector awards

• impacts and outcomes - benefits, improvements, problems, risks, disadvantages - for students, academics/teachers, management, and organisations

• factors and issues affecting arrangements - degree of internal support, external supports, resourcing, sector interface issues - pedagogical differences, assessment practices, staff and student attitudes, market issues, competition and collaboration, operational and administrative barriers, changes in qualifications, cross-sectoral supporting mechanisms

• other issues - future plans, sustainability, suggestions for improvements, policy considerations.

A draft case study report was prepared of each of the case study sites and returned to the contact person to check for accuracy and gaps.

The vignettes were prepared from published material, largely from websites, and most did not involve direct consultations.
3 Southbank Institute of TAFE

3.1 Background

Focus
This case study focuses on the arrangements for credit transfer and articulation developed by Southbank Institute of TAFE (soon to be re-named the Southbank Institute of Technology) with a specific emphasis on its partnership with Griffith University and, to a more limited extent, its relationship with the Queensland University of Technology (QUT).

Together, these organisations are building an education corridor that spans the greater southern Brisbane area through to the Gold Coast. At the one end of this corridor is an integrated education precinct which includes Southbank Institute (SBIT), QUT and two faculties of Griffith University – the Conservatorium and the College of Art.

SBIT is a large, multi-campus TAFE with 27,000 students including 1,400 international students and 400 programs. SBIT has 40% of the Queensland diploma and advanced diploma market. Griffith University and QUT are large, multi-campus universities with 35,000 students and 40,000 students respectively.

In addition to their direct relationship with SBIT, both Griffith University and QUT have an overarching relationship with TAFE Queensland and a number of partnerships with other TAFE institutes and VTE private providers. Southbank Institute also has credit transfer and articulation arrangements with the Australian Catholic University, University of Southern Queensland, University of Queensland, and the University of Canberra Brisbane campus. Consideration of these other arrangements is generally outside the scope of this case study.

Objectives of the partner organisations
SBIT’s principal objective is to establish an articulation model for every one of its diploma and advanced diploma qualifications so that its students have access to a seamless continuum of education and training which provides university entry as part of the arrangement and credit equal to or better than existing credit transfer arrangements. This objective is related to other strategic objectives for SBIT such as to become the preferred and recognised VTE provider of para-professional and professional education in Queensland in a range of fields and to expand into higher education provision.

The objectives of Griffith University come from broader aims set out in a recent Discussion Paper Building Griffith’s Relationship with TAFE in the Brisbane/Gold Coast Corridor. In its relationship with TAFE, Griffith University aims to:

- build the complementary strengths and distinct institutional identity of each partner
- leverage the complementary focus of qualifications offered in each sector to develop innovative, high quality programs oriented to new and emerging industries and fields of knowledge, developed in response to emerging demand, and linked to research in these areas.
Griffith University has determined three specific objectives to give effect to this intention. One of these directly mirrors that of SBIT – namely, to develop pathways from TAFE to Griffith in all the broad fields of education offered, with credit outcomes equal to or better than existing arrangements. In this regard, there is complete synergy with the objectives of SBIT. The other objectives are inter-related and more specific, including to offer two dual awards with each TAFE institute in the Brisbane/Gold Coast corridor for inclusion in the 2007 Queensland Tertiary Admissions (QTAC) Guide and to develop an exemplar pathway in each field of education.

QUT regards its relationship with TAFE as a long-standing strategic priority and has set a target of 10% of its undergraduate student cohort having a VTE background.

Drivers

The key to SBIT’s strategic focus on forging articulation arrangements is the current policy context which is set out in the Queensland Government’s recently released White Paper, referred to as the Queensland Skills Plan. This White Paper identifies Southbank Institute as having a pivotal role in the re-structuring of TAFE to meet the State’s need for a highly skilled workforce ‘that will better match the supply of skilled labour to industry’s needs and the economy’s demands’. One of the critical areas of skill need in Queensland has been identified as the para-professional range of jobs. SBIT has been designated as the lead institute for meeting these needs.

The Queensland Skills Plan also establishes SBIT as the lead agent for developing ‘university pathways and articulation arrangements’ which, in conjunction with its own higher education provision, will ensure ‘TAFE graduates have greater access to university courses and to specific vocational programs for university graduates’.

In broad terms, the White Paper establishes SBIT as the central public provider of higher-level VET programs and as the agent for developing pathways with higher education through its own internal provision and external partnerships with universities. It is envisaged that the high-level programs and cross-sector credit arrangements developed by this Institute will then be accessible through regional TAFEs across Queensland.

The roles ascribed to SBIT in the White paper are an endorsement of the strategic directions, models, programs and branding of the Institute over the past few years. While the Institute has had credit transfer arrangements for many years, the approach shifted significantly from 2002 when the current Institute Director was appointed, and higher level VTE programs and direct pathways between the sectors became key outcomes for SBIT. This approach was also strongly supported by the Department of Employment and Training.

Policy is also an important external driver for the university partners. The changing policy settings in higher education are creating a more differentiated higher education market with increasing competition. In the case of Griffith University, the

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2 Ibid p. 17.
very clear and strong commitment to expanding innovative partnerships with TAFE is set against the background of three key inter-related drivers as outlined in the Griffith University Discussion Paper as:

- a volatile and changing higher education market
- development of an integrated vision of the University’s key roles of research, teaching and learning, and community engagement
- a recognition of broader changes to work and society and the need for new forms of knowledge creation and skills development

The geographic context is also very significant to SBIT, Griffith University and QUT in the Brisbane/Gold Coast corridor and more specifically the Southbank precinct. The geographic connection is about meeting the needs of the students in their immediate environment and about creating conditions that support an enhanced capacity to collaborate.

The economic, educational and geographic contexts are also extremely important. The Queensland Skills Plan highlights the issue of the under-qualified nature of the para-professional workforce and identifies the re-structure and central role of SBIT as a key policy response. The under-education of people living in the Brisbane/Gold Coast corridor relative to the employment requirements of the economy of the region has also been highlighted by Griffith University as a key factor in developing greater links with TAFE.

At a more prosaic but equally important level, the decreasing demand for university places and the significant market competition pressures are key factors for the VTE/university partnerships. All universities must develop strategies to maintain demand by qualified, capable students and Griffith University sees its partnerships with TAFE as part of a suite of strategies to address this need.

A further driver nominated by QUT is its current funding agreement with DEST which requires QUT to ‘maintain at least the existing arrangements it has in place for articulation of domestic students with VTE providers and to provide evidence of these to the Commonwealth on request.’ This same clause is in all DEST funding agreements.

Other contextual factors mentioned include the broader government agenda for lifelong learning and pathways, and the AVCC’s support and guidance in the form of the AVCC/AQFAB Guidelines.

### 3.2 Key features of the case study

#### Terminology

The terms commonly used at SBIT to describe arrangements between the Institute and its university partners are ‘credit transfer’ and ‘articulation pathways’ with meanings similar to those presented in the Stage 1 Report.

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5 Information provided during consultations.
The emphasis at SBIT is on developing articulation agreements (rather than credit transfer) with its partner organisations as part of a broader strategy that also includes provision of associate degrees, vocational graduate certificates/diplomas and the development of vocational degrees in areas where there are clearly defined gaps in the higher education market. The move into higher education provision is not yet seen as a tension or competition with its university partners because the focus of these developments is distinctive and different from offerings by the universities.

Griffith University’s current Credit Transfer Policy (March 2000) uses similar terminology, with the terms ‘prior learning’, ‘articulation’, ‘credit’ and ‘credit on transfer’ holding similar meanings as in the Stage 1 Report. More recently, Griffith University has identified the need to develop a broader set of definitions that reflect current practice and a separate Discussion Paper has been prepared ‘to develop a shared language to describe current and emerging collaborative practices and arrangements between our institutions ... to develop conceptual tools ... and understanding of the nature, purpose and scope of agreements entered into’. The Griffith Discussion Paper uses the term ‘articulation’ from the perspective of the student who may be articulating or moving between the sectors in either direction. ‘Pathways’ is used to refer to arrangements that enable students to transfer between programs.

Relevant terminology used at QUT includes ‘academic credit’, ‘double TAFE/QUT awards’ and ‘dual awards’. Academic credit is defined as:

... credit granted towards a student’s current course from previous studies successfully completed at another tertiary institution or in another course at QUT. Can also be referred to as advanced standing, credit, credit transfer, exemptions or recognition of prior learning.

Articulation at QUT is used in the sense of the student who articulates when enrolled in a dual or double TAFE/QUT award. A TAFE/QUT award is one in which students gain both a QUT and a TAFE award in a connected program with entry through QTAC. These awards may be consecutive or integrated.

Credit transfer arrangements

Credit transfer arrangements for holders of VTE qualifications issued by SBIT are negotiated by the Institute as well as centrally by TAFE Queensland. The centralised TAFE Queensland agreements apply to the qualification irrespective of the awarding TAFE and involve seven state-based universities. These credit transfer arrangements are set out in a web publication - TAFE Queensland pathways to university. The publication includes:

- information about the meaning of credit transfer
- types of credit (block, specified, unspecified)

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8 QUT Policy C/3.3 QUT Guidelines for Development and Approval of Awards.
• contacts for all TAFEs and the universities involved
• details of the credit agreements reached between different TAFE awards and university programs by field of study.

At the time of last publication of this document (May 2005), credit transfer had been negotiated across a large number of current and old VTE qualifications delivered by TAFE, ranging from certificate III through to advanced diploma linking to various bachelor degrees in a range of fields across the participating universities, with varying levels of credit. The vast majority of these agreements would be classified as structured credit transfer with a significant number providing up to one year’s credit. All of the agreements specify the maximum credit to be granted, implying that less generous provision is possible. Students are advised that the credit agreements negotiated centrally will need to be verified by their respective TAFE and the relevant university.

The TAFE Queensland publication also includes information on admission through the Queensland Tertiary Admissions Centre (QTAC) clarifying to prospective students from TAFE that admission is a separate process from the credit available for VTE qualifications.

SBIT also has some structured credit transfer arrangements as part of its database of agreements with the universities it partners. These are additional or different arrangements separate from the centralised TAFE Queensland credit transfer arrangements.

Griffith University was the first university to sign a Memorandum of Understanding in 2002 with TAFE Queensland for generic credit transfer arrangements and QUT followed soon after. As the website for TAFE Queensland shows, there is a significant number of credit transfer arrangements in place between TAFE Queensland and these universities.

Both Griffith University and QUT have Credit Transfer Precedent databases that document all credit transfer agreements made at faculty-level within these universities.

Articulation models
While SBIT has negotiated some credit transfer agreements over and above the centralised TAFE Queensland model, the Institute has also strategically focused on building enhanced arrangements with its partner universities through the development of articulation models that ‘provide seamless pathways for SBIT students to university with appropriate credit’. These encompass the design and development of concurrent, nested and end-on dual and triple cross-sector awards.

Articulation is favoured over credit transfer because it provides SBIT students with clear and constant credit that is based on a principle of one-for-one credit and guaranteed admission. This enables SBIT to market itself to the community as an...

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10 As the focus of this case study is on SBIT and its partners, the project team did not investigate the systems, models and processes used by TAFE Queensland in negotiating these credit outcomes.

11 EPU officer.

12 Consultation with Institute Director, Craig Sherrin, 16 March 2006.
alternative and direct pathway to university, producing graduates who have work-ready skills.

SBIT has developed a range of different articulation models to meet the specific needs of its students and partner organisations. Documentation prepared by the Institute outlines 31 different models, with a synopsis of the advantages and disadvantages of each. In practice, only a few of these models are currently in use and these include the:

- embedded dual award model – a three-year program combining TAFE/university studies in the first eighteen months and the final eighteen months at university
- end-on triple award model (diploma, advanced diploma, bachelor degree) with hand-over to university in Semester 4
- interview model – end-on or combined study with interview for university selection after one or two years of TAFE study
- associate degree/degree model – a total of three years in duration.

At the time of preparing this case study, a total of 30 articulated qualifications had been negotiated by SBIT with its partner universities. Of these, fourteen have been developed with Griffith University and will be available for 2007 entry through QTAC.

For Griffith University, the development of these enhanced articulation models is also a key priority, in conjunction with standardised credit transfer and other partnership outcomes such as bonus entry points for students from the partner TAFEs, shared teaching, joint development of curriculum and research, professional development and community service.

Working with individual TAFEs will allow us to develop the necessary conditions to maximise student success. This is the one reason why we need to move our partnership with TAFE beyond linking programs in both sectors to developing innovative curriculum that supports student learning, offers them a coherent learning environment, scaffolds their future learning and extends and enriches their skills, understanding and capacity in their discipline and vocation.

One of the enhancements available to SBIT students through the partnership with Griffith University is the awarding of bonus points for admission which involved a TAFE diploma being ranked at a Tertiary Entrance Rank of 87 and an advanced diploma rated at 93. These bonus points also apply to Griffith University’s other TAFE Institute partners.

QUT has also invested significantly in the dual award model with 24 separate dual awards currently in operation. Six of these have been developed with SBIT, the others in conjunction with its other TAFE partners. The SBIT dual awards cover: IT/computing, social services, engineering (civil and mechanical), and

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13 Internal document entitled Articulation Pathways Generic Models, Cheales R, Southbank Institute of TAFE, no publication date.
business/arts. All are end-on, except engineering which is moving to this model (see below).

Future developments

All parties emphasise continuing developments of dual awards or other forms of articulation. SBIT is in the process of developing a further 31 articulation agreements with its partners. Griffith University is developing two new dual awards with SBIT incorporating the Diploma of Laboratory Technology (pathology testing)/Bachelor of Science and the same diploma with a Bachelor of Biotechnology. QUT is also looking at further awards with a new dual award also in laboratory technology (biotechnology) planned for 2007.

Data on student transfer

Based on information and documentation provided in the course of consultations, it is evident that the agreements on credit transfer and articulation are translated into genuine credit pathways for transferring TAFE students (including SBIT students) with demonstration of the benefits to the receiving university in terms of student progress and retention.

Data provided by Griffith University indicates that, in 2003, 26% of Griffith University’s commencing students gained admission to bachelor programs on the basis of complete or incomplete TAFE studies and a significant number would have received credit for their prior studies. In 2004, the University reported that 486 students received credit for their prior TAFE studies.

Internal analysis by Griffith University of students receiving credit in 2003 found that their retention rates were the same in their first year at the University as all other students, but were 10% higher at the end of two years of study compared with students in general. TAFE students with credit have comparable completion rates and overall performance.

Data was also provided on the number of places that will be available for 2007 QTAC entry at Griffith University through dual awards and the credit available in this form. A total of 545 university places will be made available, averaging between ten and twenty student transfers to Griffith University per dual award. Of these, 110 will be available to SBIT students.\(^{15}\) Credit is variable ranging between one to 1.5 years.

At QUT, students with VTE diploma and advanced diploma qualifications comprised 12% of over 7,400 commencing undergraduate enrolments in 2006. Since 1998, QUT has provided bonus points for admission on the basis of completed diplomas and advanced diplomas, thus making QUT a more attractive option for applicants with VTE qualifications. Figures provided by QUT for their dual awards with SBIT show that the number of commencing students has varied across the different dual awards and years of operation. In 2005, a total of 60 students transferred to QUT through a dual award compared with 93 in 2004. The number of

\(^{15}\) Figures provided at consultation with Griffith University staff. It should be noted that more places will be available for Gold Coast Institute of TAFE students (175) which is the most proximate TAFE to Griffith University’s Gold Coast site.
offers made via articulation was higher than acceptances, at 169 in 2005 and 105 in 2004.

A small number of interviews with students using these dual award pathways reinforced the value of combining studies in this form, with students believing they are well prepared by SBIT to undertake university studies either concurrently or as end-on articulation. Support for concurrent studies was emphasised as a way of managing transition more effectively by being able to move between these different learning environments and gain on-going supports within TAFE for successful transition.

Leadership, governance and co-ordination

A key factor in the development of SBIT’s articulation models is the level of leadership, strategic commitment and infrastructure to support these initiatives. As previously mentioned, the current Director of the Institute has taken a strong leadership role in this area. SBIT’s Strategic Plan clearly addresses the focus on partnerships. The Business Plan reflects this key value and identifies developing ‘new products through Educational Partnerships’ as one of four key performance indicators, with strategies covering both articulation and increased higher education delivery by SBIT. This is translated into a ‘Product Development Plan’ that sets out targets.

Implementation of the Business Plan and day-to-day management of the arrangements are handled by the Educational Partnerships Unit (EPU) which sits within the Educational Services Division under the direction of the Academic Council and Institute Director. The EPU was established in 2002 and is staffed by three senior project officers and an administration officer. Its responsibilities include managing the development of the dual awards and providing the focal point for developing SBIT’s own higher education programs. The unit is currently funded on a project basis with approximately half a million dollars.

Griffith University also has a strong governance structure and leadership in supporting credit transfer and articulation arrangements through its Vice-Chancellor, key committees and senior staff. While the University’s Strategic Plan 2006 to 2010 does not address these areas directly, a number of key goals, particularly those relating to ‘student diversity’ and ‘distinctive learning’, are linked to this support.

The overall responsibility for developing generic credit transfer and other collaborative arrangements rests with the Griffith University/TAFE Links Committee that was established in June 2003. The Committee comprises senior executive and academic staff and meets at least twice a year, reporting to the Vice-Chancellor, the Director-General of the Department of Education and Training and the Chair, TAFE Queensland. Griffith University employs a Credit Transfer and Articulation Manager who organises credit arrangements, working with faculty staff and with EPU staff where SBIT is involved. Policy support and expertise have been enhanced recently through a critical staff appointment leading to the Discussion Papers mentioned earlier. New policy directions focus on enhancing generic outcomes negotiated through TAFE Queensland with nuanced outcomes negotiated through the specific partners.
QUT’s credit transfer agreements are all determined at faculty-level in accordance with its credit transfer policy and all arrangements are placed on its credit transfer precedent database. There is no central administration of credit arrangements and each faculty has responsibility for managing its own processes in accordance with the policy. The policy provides for general principles to be applied that support block credit of one year’s advanced standing in a bachelor award for TAFE diplomas/advanced diplomas in related fields. Dual awards at QUT are managed through a separate policy. The Director of Academic Policy and Programmes must confirm the consultation process and resolution of any issues around dual awards while the Executive Dean of the proposing faculty must sign off the MoU with the relevant TAFE.

**Development process**

In forging and managing SBIT’s articulation models, the EPU undertakes a number of key tasks. These include identifying new or current VTE qualifications that may be suitable for articulation with a university award, developing a schedule for development, making initial contact with the university, organising cross-institutional discussions, facilitating development between a SBIT faculty and a university faculty, organising a formal Memorandum of Understanding or other form of agreement and notifying QTAC.

The approach in formalising arrangements with QUT is to create a separate MoU for each and every new articulated award rather than entering into a general MoU between the institutions involved. The MoU’s for each articulation arrangement may vary in detail but all address:

- the purpose of the arrangement
- direct entry quota and allowances for additional entry at the discretion of the university
- names of persons as key contacts who are responsible for monitoring the dual award and providing periodic and annual reviews
- structure of articulation model including advanced standing (specified or unspecified) and time of commencement of the arrangement
- joint promotion and marketing
- intellectual property.

QUT staff must follow the policy on developing dual awards and put together a course business plan that justifies its development, following the points above but also identifying relevance to QUT’s strategic directions. Each MoU is signed by the Dean of the relevant university faculty, a senior Director of the university, the Director of Educational Services SBIT and the Institute Director. The MoUs have a three-year life span but can be terminated at any time with twelve month’s notice.

In the case of Griffith University, the agreement is determined through a formal letter of approval to the EPU unit or Institute director, with all dual awards monitored through the Credit Transfer and Articulation Manager.

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16 Notes of consultation discussion with QUT staff – 17 March 2006.
The actual process of development is jointly undertaken by the staff of the relevant faculties/schools and may involve a series of meetings to determine the rationale, agreed credit outcomes or advanced standing, study plan (which units/subjects are studied in each year of the articulated program and by whom), additional academic supports for students using this pathway (to be provided by SBIT or the university) and the date of first intake. The meetings may take place over a relatively short period, while some take several months or even years. The EPU attends and facilitates these meetings which are conducted in a highly consultative manner.

Consultations with case study participants identified that key factors in developing a successful model are mutual respect and/or a shared educational philosophy in the particular field as well as agreement about the relevance of developing an articulated award. To get the process off to a good start, these ‘first principles’ are established at the initial meeting between faculty representatives. It is a process of each recognising the educational value of what the other offers. The standing of SBIT delivery and assessment and the graduates it produces is a major factor and the university partners ‘know what they are getting’.  

This is particularly important in such fields as hotel management and IT/Engineering. In the former, SBIT is widely recognised through its hotel school and the articulation models established in this field focus on delivering TAFE students with high level practical skills and introduction of understandings of business theory that are then extended at a theoretical level in the final university year of a triple award. In IT, the joint development team worked together to dovetail delivery of the new IT Training Package into the re-designed QUT Bachelor of Information Technology to maximise credit for the articulated award. The process involved re-design of SBIT delivery of the IT Diploma to match better the re-designed bachelor program associated with a close examination of the equivalence of units across the diploma/bachelor awards.

Other factors in developing these dual or sometimes triple awards, which were identified in consultations with staff members, include using different curriculum in TAFE or extending the delivery of Training Packages to support the pathways. In the Business field, SBIT is registered to deliver a new Diploma of Business Studies developed by TAFE Queensland to maximise credit, rather than try and work with the Business or Financial Services Training Package. The new diploma includes a mix of Training Package units as well as additional first year university units such as economics and statistics that are not addressed by the Training Package. These units are seen as essential in ensuring SBIT transfer students are well prepared. The Diploma of Business Studies is the springboard for a range of articulation models with Griffith and QUT in business/commerce.

In Engineering, a dual award was developed with QUT involving an Advanced Diploma (Hons) in Civil Engineering articulating into the Bachelor of Technology (Civil). The model mixed university and TAFE studies after the first year and included the teaching of advanced maths and report writing skills as part of the TAFE delivery to support students in their mixed delivery in second year. SBIT based this model on a VTE accredited course in engineering that provided the capacity to incorporate these supportive subjects. Accreditation ran out in 2005 and rather than move to the Training Package, SBIT has developed an associate degree

17 Point made by SBIT staff member in consultations.
to maintain the articulation arrangement. The change has meant moving to an end-on rather than an integrated delivery model that has benefits in terms of ease of scheduling but may lose other advantages such as providing a more supportive student transfer environment.

QUT identified its new course structure adopted by some faculties as likely to enhance further credit transfer and articulation agreements. In some areas, the University is moving to a 2 + 1 model in which the third year comprises electives allowing for greater flexibility in granting credit.

Curriculum flexibility was specifically raised as a very important issue by SBIT staff. SBIT has adopted a number of curriculum approaches to assist the development of articulation agreements. These include using non-Training Package qualifications, adding or modifying to Training Packages by teaching extra subjects and moving away from VTE qualifications to associate degrees. The Institute Director expressed some concerns that the Training Package structure does not support the flexibility needed for articulation models which require re-shaping the program structure in both sectors.

Although these perspectives were expressed, a number of the new articulation models have been developed using existing Training Packages. To support its staff in working with TAFE, Griffith University has produced a guide explaining how Training Packages work.

Competency-based assessment can impact on the capacity of TAFE students to gain admission and access to structured credit transfer arrangements. SBIT uses an assessment system called ‘Performance Level Assessments’ that was developed by TAFE Queensland and that is additional to competency-based assessment in some qualifications. This approach can provide students with a higher admission score. The focus of this assessment is essentially adding attitudinal assessment to the mix. A one to seven point grading scale is also under development. While raised as an issue, competency-based assessment did not appear as a major issue and all the dual and triple awards being developed by SBIT include access by direct entry.

Administrative issues were raised as difficulties, but not as insurmountable problems. The most commonly raised issues by both students and staff relate to articulation models involving concurrent or joint studies in each sector. The major issues are timetabling and joint handling of the administration. Flexibility on the part of both students and staff enables issues to be resolved, but adds an extra burden on both. Some moves towards end-on rather than concurrent models have been made to reduce administrative burden.

**Evaluation and monitoring**

For SBIT, responsibility for monitoring and review of all agreements rests with the EPU. Each MoU has a review date that is monitored. Any changes to programs are also signalled to the EPU. When the review period is near, the EPU notifies TAFE and university faculty representatives and a review process is commenced which will include consideration of issues and outcomes. As the articulation models are recent, there have been few reviews. The changes in the engineering model described above were an outcome of a review process.

Griffith University staff monitor generic arrangements through provision of advice to the Griffith University/TAFE Links Committee. More detailed evaluations are
now being undertaken as part of the shifting focus towards collaborative articulation models. The data on student progress and retention rates of TAFE students who transfer to Griffith degrees is part of a more detailed review and analysis undertaken internally. This monitoring is considered very important in demonstrating the business value of Griffith University’s commitment to credit transfer and articulation. Research by QUT in the business field has found similar results demonstrating good progress and retention of TAFE transfer students.

Information and data management

All MoUs for credit transfer and articulation models developed by SBIT with its partners are recorded and filed by the EPU. The EPU does not keep records of articulating students as these are managed centrally. Depending on the model used, students may be enrolled jointly with the university, separately by each partner for each phase of the articulated award or enrolled as a university student. Sometimes students undertaking one of these programs may be admitted directly as part of the MoU, while others must apply through QTAC.

Griffith and SBIT use the same management information systems which is a major factor assisting in maintaining records. In contrast, the lack of a common data management system was identified by QUT as a difficulty in the management of student data and for students when going through the enrolment process. Despite these difficulties, staff in both organisations work hard to address issues as they arise.

Promotion and marketing

SBIT’s promotion and marketing are undertaken at a number of levels - through QTAC, the web, a paper-based marketing brochure and information to schools. The QTAC Guide includes information about the dual/triple awards and prospective students nominate these awards in their preferences. The SBIT website provides easy access to information about the availability of articulated qualifications. A glossy, one page brochure has been produced entitled Pathways to the university of your choice - Your future, Your choice which outlines how articulated qualifications work, and lists 16 of the currently operating dual awards. The brochure was produced for this year’s intake and will be updated. The SBIT Marketing Department and EPU regularly send materials to schools with updates on new articulation courses. The Schools Liaison Officer holds a career counselling day and career expos and undertakes some school site visits to explain the models. The possibility of using current students in the programs as ambassadors to schools was suggested in the site visit.

Griffith University’s website provides clear information for prospective students. The website links to information about what credit is, how to apply, frequently asked questions, relevant policies, application forms and details of the credit precedent database that can be searched. QUT’s website also contains details of its

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credit transfer policy and information on credit available as set out in the credit precedent list.\textsuperscript{20}

QUT has a web tool \textit{Studyfinder}\textsuperscript{21} which is a key student recruitment tool as it is its website that lists course by faculty. Both of these identify the range of dual TAFE/QUT awards, as well as providing other information on credit transfer. There is also a page devoted to school careers counsellors.

### 3.3 Summary

The key features of this case study can be summarised as follows:

- The partnership featured in the case study is driven by a TAFE institute but is supported by strategic priorities of key university partners that also have partnerships with a range of other VTE providers.
- State-level policies and directions provide explicit support for the TAFE institute initiatives.
- Geographic proximity and the development of educational precincts and corridors play a role in determining partners.
- External and internal factors for both the TAFE institute and university partners converge to provide key drivers.
- Resources have been committed to provide central co-ordination and support for planning, development and on-going implementation of all initiatives.
- Strong leadership and obvious champions by all parties ensure progress is sustained.
- Arrangements are focused on the development of articulation pathways, although structured credit transfer arrangements provide a base-level of credit across a wide range of programs.
- Articulation arrangements require flexibility in curriculum design from both parties.
- Specific processes and structures have been established to maximise success of negotiations and agreed arrangements.
- Some efforts have been directed towards clarifying terminology to prevent misunderstandings and developing standard models to reduce complexity.
- There is explicit acknowledgement of the importance of mutual respect and good personal relationships in all negotiations.

\textsuperscript{20} See: \url{http://www.studentservices.qut.edu.au/applying/credit/precedents}

\textsuperscript{21} See: \url{www.studyfinder.qut.edu.au}
4 Edith Cowan University

4.1 Background

Focus

The focus of this case study is the arrangements for credit transfer and articulation at Edith Cowan University (ECU), in particular new arrangements currently being introduced to strengthen and co-ordinate more effectively credit transfer and articulation within the University. ECU’s partnership with West Coast TAFE through the Joondalup Learning Precinct is also presented. ECU’s arrangements with the Perth Institute of Business and Technology (PIBT) were also to be the subject of the case study. However, these arrangements proved to be outside the scope of the project as they involve articulation from higher education diplomas to ECU degrees.

Edith Cowan University (ECU) was established as a university by legislation in 1991 evolving from the multi-campus Western Australian College of Advanced Education, itself the product of the merger in the early 1980s of smaller, primarily teacher education colleges.

The University has consolidated on to three metropolitan campuses. It is in the final process of decanting from and disposing of its Churchlands campus (which had been its administrative headquarters) to focus on development on its Joondalup campus to service the rapidly growing northern corridor of Perth. ECU has a campus in Bunbury, servicing students in the south-west of Western Australia, and a presence in a number of other regional localities. ECU also incorporates the West Australian Academy of the Performing Arts which is partly funded by the State for VTE programs and which is based on its Mt Lawley campus.

ECU’s major enrolments are in teacher education, nursing and business studies. The University has diversified its profile in recent years, including the introduction of law.

Objectives of the partner organisations

The ECU Strategic Plan 2003 to 2007 contains three themes: service, professionalism and enterprise. The Plan highlights the importance of partnerships and networks. The Strategic Plan also sets out five strategic priorities including partnerships, precincts and pathways which underpin the priority accorded to credit transfer and articulation within ECU.

The strategic priority is reflected in the following ways:

1. ECU has developed partnership agreements with a range of Australian and overseas higher education and VTE institutions underpinned by credit transfer and credit recognition arrangements. ECU has agreements in place with a number of TAFE institutions in Western Australia and in particular with West Coast TAFE and Southwest TAFE, regions where it has campuses. ECU was amongst the first universities to establish an articulation arrangement with an independent or related institution (PIBT) where, as the principal focus of the course, a specific pathway was created to allow students to articulate directly
from a diploma or an advanced diploma course into the second year of an ECU degree.

2. ECU is focusing on its development as the principal higher education provider in the northern corridor of Perth through its Joondalup campus which forms part of a learning precinct comprising West Coast TAFE and the Western Australian Police Academy. The Joondalup Learning Precinct is an important focus for the development of articulation arrangements for Edith Cowan University. Under the precinct model, Edith Cowan University, West Coast TAFE and WA Police Academy have formed a unique partnership in which the three institutions, while maintaining their separate identities, share facilities and other resources to develop and provide high-quality academic programs. The City of Joondalup is an *ex officio* partner of the precinct.

3. ECU, with a principal focus on the service professions, has sought to develop learning pathways in areas such as nursing, security, information technology and business services which are directly related to careers and professional pathways.

For West Coast TAFE, the objectives of its partnership with ECU are to contribute to the development of the Joondalup Learning Precinct and to create learning pathways for its graduates. The West Coast TAFE Strategic Plan 2005 to 2009 has a key strategy to ‘negotiate further articulation and collaborative delivery projects with universities and Joondalup Learning Precinct Partners’.

West Coast TAFE, through the TAFEWA network, also has arrangements in place with other universities, in particular Murdoch University and the University of Notre Dame Australia. ECU also has partnerships with many other organisations, including other TAFEWA institutions and the Adelaide College of TAFE. ECU has a significant educational and commercial partnership with PIBT. For PIBT, the partnership with ECU forms its core business, in effect providing an alternative entry pathway to and credit recognition for a higher education degree developed in the main for the international student market.

**Drivers**

Since it establishment, ECU has grown to over 21,000 students. In common with a number of other outer-metropolitan and regional institutions, demand for ECU courses dropped in 2005. Reasons for this slowing in demand are thought to include the strengths of the labour market in Western Australia, increased demand for VTE and in particular trade courses, a drying up of the pool of mature age students and the possible impact of increased user charges. A slowing of demand by international students and a drop in the Western Australia share of the overseas student market are also factors.

Whatever the explanation for slowing in demand, credit transfer and articulation arrangements are seen as growing in importance for ECU as it seeks to diversify its student intake base, differentiate itself from other Western Australian universities and focus on growing higher education participation levels in the regions and communities it serves. The on-going development of the Joondalup Learning Precinct is a key element of this strategy.

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22 This issue is discussed in *The Australian Higher Education Supplement*, April 4, 2006.
The shifting patterns of admission to the University in recent years are exemplified in the following table.

### Table 4.1: Basis of admission to ECU, 2000 to 2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>School Leaver</th>
<th>Mature Age</th>
<th>TAFE</th>
<th>Tertiary</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>ECU - Bridging Course</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>1839</td>
<td>536</td>
<td>375</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>1520</td>
<td>632</td>
<td>451</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>241</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>1579</td>
<td>783</td>
<td>491</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>1720</td>
<td>846</td>
<td>480</td>
<td>227</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>1682</td>
<td>804</td>
<td>576</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>1304</td>
<td>706</td>
<td>516</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Edith Cowan University 2006

While data are not available on the number of TAFE students who were admitted with credit for their TAFE studies, discussions with the staff member responsible for the administration of advanced standing policies in the Faculty of Business Studies and Law suggest that, at least in that faculty, a significant number of TAFE students receive credit. A proportion of students entering from other pathways, in particular mature age students and students entering from other tertiary studies, will also have received advanced standing, not just those transferring directly from TAFE.

ECU, through its Academic Board, has recently adopted a new advanced standing policy updating its arrangements for credit transfer and recognition of prior learning. The development of the new policy has been driven by the need to update and regularise arrangements for credit transfer across the University. ECU also established an Advanced Standing Unit in 2005, within the Student Services Directorate, to co-ordinate arrangements for credit transfer and recognition of prior learning across ECU to ensure a faster and more consistent decision-making process on advanced standing applications and to monitor outcomes more effectively.

As these arrangements have only just been put in place, the credit transfer and articulation arrangements at ECU described in this case study have evolved over a number of years and are not a consequence of or driven by the new policy or administrative arrangements.

Nonetheless, the new arrangements are important, as staff interviewed for the case study highlighted a growing level of awareness amongst both international and domestic students of the availability of pathways based on credit transfer and articulation, particularly in the context of increasing student fees. There is an awareness that students could complete qualifications and enter the labour market (or, in the case in international students, apply for permanent residence) more quickly than if they were required to complete a full degree in the normal time span.

Levels of credit availability can be key factors in influencing student (particularly international student) choice between institutions. Staff also saw the need for a careful balance in this regard, not only in terms of the University's entrance requirements but also because, in some instances, international students in
particular had expressed concern about quality if it was felt that they could gain credit too easily. Rapid, accurate and consistent responses to requests for advice on, or applications for, advanced standing are however seen as crucial, because a delayed response may have students opting for a competitor institution.

The WA Department of Education and Training in association with all of the universities in Western Australia has produced a *Guide to University Options for TAFEWA Graduates*. In addition to general advice on university entrance requirements, the guide sets out each university’s general policies on credit transfer, with links to university websites. A range of examples of degree programs are also mapped to TAFEWA diploma and advanced diploma courses, including ECU programs. The guide was developed and published following the WA universities’ reluctance to pursue a proposed state-wide agreement with TAFE on credit transfer.

ECU has referenced national policies and guidelines to underpin its revised policy on advanced standing, and has responded to the AVCC survey of universities on the MCEETYA Good Practice Principles. However, the new policy and arrangements for credit transfer and articulation at ECU, including the development of the new policy, have been driven more by the internal strategy and priorities of the University rather than national or state policies or initiatives.

4.2 **Key features of the case study**

**Terminology**

The ECU Academic Board adopted a new ECU Advanced Standing Policy in April 2006. The policy covers both Credit Transfer and Recognition of Prior Learning. The term ‘articulation’ is not used in the policy or formally at ECU. To the extent that it is used, the term ‘articulation’ is seen to apply to pathways to and from ECU courses generally, not just those where credit transfer arrangements are available. However, an excellent example of articulation, as defined in the typology set out in the Stage 1 Report and involving collaborative program development and nested qualifications, is discussed in this case study.

**Models for credit**

The Advanced Standing Policy defines ‘credit’ in the following terms:

> The provision of credit in a course as the result of a successful recognition of prior learning or credit transfer application. This may include:

- **specified credit**: the student is given credit for specific subjects, modules, units or competencies
- **unspecified credit**: the student is given credit so that they are required to complete fewer credit points, subjects, modules, units or competencies (e.g. credit for elective units or an unspecified unit set or minor)
- **block credit**: the student is given credit for a block component of a course (e.g. first semester – 60 credit points or first year – 120 credit points)
- **substitutions**: the student is required to undertake alternative work in place of a module, unit or units scheduled in the course.

The policy provides for specified credit for ECU units subject to the VTE course (in this instance) containing an equivalence of academic rigour, at least 70%
equivalence in content to the ECU unit and an equivalence of study duration (e.g. equivalent to a fifteen point unit if that is the credit point value of the unit for which credit may be awarded).

The policy also provides for unspecified credit for an ECU elective unit on the same basis as specified credit but without the requirement for 70% equivalence in content, as this is not relevant for electives.

The policy involves the application of two guidelines:

1. An assessment of the institution, based on appropriate registration in Australia as a VTE or higher education provider or by the government in the country in which the institution is located or by assessment by the ECU International Office.

2. An assessment of the course once the institution has met the requirement of guideline 1. Courses must be equivalent to AQF certificate IV or comparable to year 12 in Australia as a minimum. An assessment of the length and breadth of the course is required to ensure consistency with AQF requirements together with an analysis of the quality, depth of study and content of the course. Individual students must also meet minimum English language competency requirements.

The policy also sets out maximum credit available. For certificate IV, it is entry only. For diplomas, credit of 120 credit points may be awarded in a bachelor degree of which no more that 60 points can be awarded other than at first year level or 180 credit points may be awarded of which no more than 90 points are available other than at the first year level. This equates to one year and 1.5 years of exemptions respectively from a bachelor degree.

Arrangements are in place for the recognition of courses with many institutions by ECU, and formal partnership agreements are in place with 150 institutions, mainly through the Faculty of Business and Law and with overseas institutions. However, where the qualification is the same, ECU does not discriminate between students from Registered Training Organisations including TAFE institutions with which it has agreements and those where it does not.

There is a full range of examples evident across the different typologies of unstructured and structured credit transfer at ECU. For students, ECU and partner institutions, arrangements are simplest, most transparent and easiest to process where structured credit is available.

However, the rationalisation of qualifications within National Training Packages if accompanied by increased flexibility in how qualifications are packaged, the likelihood of continuous refinement of packages through adjustments to content, and the potential proliferation of state-accredited courses may make it difficult for structured or specified credit information to be made easily available. The content and structure of qualifications may need to be examined to ensure that ECU’s 70% matching content requirement for specified credit is observed. This issue was evident from discussions with both ECU and TAFE staff.
Articulation models

Joondalup Learning Precinct

Educational pathways developed under the precinct model encompass a range of TAFE programs for which credit at ECU is available. Specific pathways include:

- awards in hospitality and tourism which allow West Coast TAFE students to articulate into ECU courses with advanced standing
- the Bachelor of Science (Network Technology) which allows students who graduate from the West Coast Diploma in Network Technology to enter directly into the second year of the bachelor program at ECU
- collaboration between ECU and the WA Police Academy on the delivery of units in advocacy, criminal procedures sentencing and criminal law
- graduate programs in strategic risk management between the institutional partners, the City of Joondalup and industry
- a special articulation pathway for students in the West Coast TAFE certificate IV (now diploma) in enrolled nursing to articulate into the ECU Bachelor of Nursing
- articulation pathways for students from West Coast TAFE from the Certificate IV in Fitness to articulate into the ECU Bachelor of Science (Exercise and Sport Science).

The precinct partners also collaborate in areas such as sharing resources and facilities, staff development and marketing.

The precinct development was identified by both ECU and West Coast TAFE staff as an important driver of credit transfer and articulation arrangements. But some staff in both institutions also identified areas for improvement. The level of commitment to cross-sectoral pathways was still seen to be overly dependent on the interest and commitment of individuals or groups in both institutions, with scope for more systematic approaches to the development of pathways and for an improved process of ensuring that ECU staff are kept abreast in advance of changes in the content of TAFE courses. These improvements may well emerge as the precinct evolves.

Network Technologies

Of the pathways available through the Precinct, articulation arrangements for the network technologies program provide a clear example of an articulation arrangement (although that term is not used formally at ECU). The pathway was developed through close co-operation between ECU and TAFEWA, in particular through the ECU associate professor responsible for the course. The program is available through six TAFEWA institutions including West Coast TAFE.

The articulation arrangement was developed in direct response to industry need and to provide a career pathway for network technology technicians with clear

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24 Joondalup Learning Precinct, *Expand Your Networks.*
entry and exit points spanning TAFE and higher education qualifications. This was described as students and employees being able to ‘step on and step off’ a clear and sequential qualification structure.

Indeed, students are only able to access the ECU degree by completing the TAFE diploma. However, both parties emphasised the importance of students being able to exit with the TAFE diploma as an industry-recognised qualification and not just as a pathway to the degree program. The TAFE diploma is based on the Information Technology National Training Package. Different TAFEWA institutions have specialised in different areas of the Training Package, with West Coast TAFE providing a specific focus on vendor certified programs. This specialisation is seen by TAFEWA as important in providing a focus for different institutions and ensuring diversity of provision for students and industry. However, differences in the elective structure of the diplomas available across TAFEWA were seen by ECU as providing some difficulties in ensuring consistency in credit transfer arrangements between students from different institutions.

Due to the focus of the program on directly meeting industry needs, there appears to be significant consistency in the purpose and content of the program between TAFE and ECU. The ECU academic responsible highlighted the benefits of the arrangement as:

- ensuring that students entering the degree program already had both prior educational and prior industry experience, were motivated and were following a chosen career and educational path
- ensuring that students not wishing to complete a full degree are able to exit with a recognised industry credential and were also able to return to study at higher levels if and when they wished to
- saving time and cost for both students and industry
- allowing the sharing of facilities, equipment and staff, particularly in areas of high cost technology (ECU has highly advanced network technologies equipment not available in TAFE) with staff able to teach on a limited basis in both institutions including through secondment arrangements.

ECU has found that there are very high completion and success rates for students transferring from the TAFE diploma through this program, relative to students entering other programs from other pathways.

The ECU academic responsible for this program highlighted the potential for significantly greater sharing of staff facilities and resources including the potential for joint delivery of programs, but he also highlighted the significant constraints imposed by funding, accountability and staffing arrangements on building greater levels of collaboration. Similar constraints were evident from discussions with TAFE staff and managers.

The potential disadvantages of a closely articulated pathway where it is the sole means of accessing the ECU degree were also highlighted in that enrolments in the TAFE qualification have fallen significantly in recent years, affecting subsequent intakes at ECU. However enrolments were reported as rising again in 2006.
Leadership, governance and co-ordination

Responsibility for the oversight of credit transfer arrangements at ECU resides with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) who has taken an active leadership role in the development of the new policy, database and establishment of the Advanced Standing Unit.

Interviews with ECU staff highlighted the importance of on-going senior leadership and commitment to extend further and strengthen credit transfer and articulation arrangements at ECU. In that regard, ECU has recently appointed a new Vice-Chancellor who was previously Vice-Chancellor at the University of Ballarat, a dual sector institution, and discussions with the Vice-Chancellor highlighted his recognition of the benefits of cross-sectoral learning pathways and his on-going commitment to the importance of credit transfer and articulation in increasing access to higher education from broader sections of the community.

Ownership for the policy on credit transfer (advanced standing) at ECU resides with the Director, Learning Development Services, and is administered through the Advanced Standing Team. Partnership agreements with other institutions must be signed off by the Vice-Chancellor or delegate.

Under the policy, decisions on levels of credit available for a particular course are determined by the Executive Dean or Dean or nominee in accordance with the ‘criteria, conditions, policies, procedures and frameworks established by the relevant Faculty Board and approved by Academic Services Committee’.

Decisions on the level of credit given to individual students are currently taken at the school level by the academic responsible for the discipline in which the credit is being sought. In the future, applications for advanced standing will be centrally co-ordinated through the Advanced Standing Unit. Where students have been enrolled in a program for which specified credit has been determined, the appropriate level of credit will be automatically assigned, the student notified and information recorded on the student file. Cases where specified credit cannot be automatically determined will be referred to schools for decision and referenced back to the Advanced Standing Unit.

The Faculty of Business and Law has also established a dedicated position to assist in the co-ordination and management of advanced standing and agreements with other institutions across the faculty. This position is reported as assisting greatly in helping to manage the growing workload associated with the increasing numbers of students seeking advanced standing.

Evaluation of advanced standing is undertaken through the regular process of faculty and departmental reviews rather than as a separate process. Monitoring of student flows through pathways with credit is possible but is limited due to time and resource constraints.

25 This consultation with the Vice-Chancellor was undertaken in the context of another project but is directly relevant to the case study.
Information management

In the past, information on applications for advanced standing and levels of credit given to students at ECU has been held centrally on student files but these have not been searchable. However, in its response to the AVCC survey on credit transfer, ECU has indicated that a ‘centralised articulation database and system for processing applications is being implemented in conjunction with established guidelines for articulation, ensuring there will be consistency in the granting of credit’. Information on applications for and levels of advanced standing awarded will be searchable and accessible by staff.

The database will also contain general information on credit levels available for VTE programs linked to the ECU website, although, for the reasons outlined above, as under current arrangements, specific credit levels will have to be assessed in terms of the actual VTE course students have undertaken.

Promotion and marketing

The ECU website for prospective students sets out the specific levels of credit available from a range of TAFE qualifications mapped to ECU degrees, with the caveat that specific decisions are dependent on subject areas chosen and that, in some instances, specified credit is not guaranteed requiring individual assessments to be made in the school concerned.

Information is also available from individual faculty websites and promotional material, from the Department of Education and Training brochure (which is on the TAFEWA website) and from the Joondalup Learning Precinct website and brochures.

Information on advanced standing will be available through the Advanced Standing Unit and the admissions process as part of a ‘one stop shop service’ to students.

However, the information is made available to students as part of general course information for prospective students and specifically non-school leavers. Articulation and credit transfer pathways for TAFE students do not appear to form a strong, central part of the marketing message of ECU at this stage. A stronger focus on its credit transfer arrangements, partnership agreements and learning pathways may assist its strategy to broaden its prospective base of students and to offer industry career and occupational pathways.

West Coast TAFE also publicises its articulation arrangements with ECU, in particular through the Joondalup Precinct, but again not as part of a central message about the benefits of study at West Coast TAFE.

Student perspectives

Discussions with students involved in the ECU nursing degree, articulating from the TAFE enrolled nursing diploma (formerly certificate level IV), highlight the substantial benefits to students from credit transfer and articulation arrangements.

The students interviewed indicated that they had initially entered a different TAFE program which was designed as a general pre-entry course and from which they expected to gain automatic entry to a nursing degree. However, during the TAFE course, students were advised that, unlike previous years, places in the degree...
program were unlikely to be available due to high levels of demand. The students were extremely unhappy about what they claimed had been misleading marketing and poor co-ordination between TAFE and universities, but appreciated subsequent efforts by TAFE staff to place them in the TAFE enrolled nursing program with credit recognition at ECU.

The ECU degree students interviewed were all working as enrolled nurses while completing their degrees. Although enrolled nursing had not been their initial preferred pathway, they saw great benefit in gaining initial skills and practical experience in working as enrolled nurses while studying to become registered nurses, despite the significant workload involved.

The students also saw significant benefits in terms of reduced student fees and debt on graduation, their capacity to enter the workforce more quickly with their TAFE qualification, the shortened time to complete the degree and the fact that the articulation arrangement represented a growing occupational pathway within the profession.

The students had completed an ECU preparatory program and highlighted in varying degrees the importance of and benefit from this program, both in familiarising themselves with university requirements, systems and facilities, and in terms of research and writing skills and in adjusting to the different pedagogy and assessment practices between TAFE and ECU.

The students seem to have made a reasonably seamless transition between the TAFE diploma and the ECU degree, in part perhaps because of the preparatory program, but they highlighted several areas where they thought improvements could be made. These included:

- greater consistency in assessment practices between TAFE and university and, in particular, the use of graded assessment in TAFE to recognise individual levels of achievement, as the basis of better feedback to students and as the basis of information for ECU lecturers
- while the students generally had not experienced difficulties as a consequence of the exemptions they had been given relative to other students, they did cite experience with one unit where they felt that they lacked some prerequisite knowledge resulting in poor assessment outcomes (but the students understood that this problem may have been identified and remedied for the 2006 intake)
- problems in the co-ordination of completion dates for their TAFE studies in terms the availability of TAFE results and admission and enrolment procedures at ECU.

These student perspectives were largely consistent with views expressed by ECU staff, in particular in relation to graded assessment, the importance for many (but not all) students articulating from TAFE of university bridging programs and problems associated with the availability of TAFE results in terms of admission and enrolment processes at ECU.

Outcomes

The development of credit transfer and articulation arrangements at ECU in recent years appears to be yielding a number of positive outcomes:
1. Until 2005, there has been a significant increase in the numbers and in the proportion of non-school leavers entering ECU, primarily students with TAFE qualifications and mature age students. While it is not possible to determine the number of these students who have received credit for previous studies, direct anecdotal evidence from staff suggests that many students are receiving credit and are attracted both by articulation pathways and by savings in time and student fees.

2. The range of courses for which credit is available from VTE qualifications and, in particular, clearly articulated courses in areas such as nursing and network technology provide a sound basis for ECU to consolidate and expand its credit transfer and articulation arrangements as a key element of a renewed focus on expanding higher education participation and opportunities.

3. Arrangements which have been put in place to date have helped to underpin the development of the Joondalup Learning Precinct. The extent to which the precinct development in turn drives new pathways and strengthens the partnership between West Coast TAFE and ECU will be a key issue for the future strategy of ECU and West Coast TAFE.

4. There are clear benefits both for the students and for the partner institutions in courses involving nested qualifications that have been co-operatively and proactively developed. The network technologies example clearly shows that, notwithstanding claims to the contrary, it is possible to develop fully articulated programs despite the different emphasis between VTE and higher education qualifications.

5. While it is too early to assess the impact of the new policy, database and administrative arrangements, they should improve consistency in the treatment of and responsiveness to students’ applications for credit transfer and significantly reduce administrative burdens on academic staff. Monitoring and evaluation of credit transfer and articulation arrangements should also be improved.

4.3 Summary

The key features of this case study can be summarised as follows:

- The case study features a university that has a number of partnerships with several TAFE institutes some of which are based on regions in which the university has a campus.
- The development of a cross-sectoral educational precinct has provided an important impetus for further collaboration.
- Partnerships and precincts feature strongly in the university’s mission and strategic plan.
- The recent drop in demand for university places is a strong driver for enhancing credit transfer and articulation arrangements.
- The profile of the university’s admissions has changed significantly over the years, towards an increasing proportion who are non-school leavers including students with VTE backgrounds.
• The university has a range of structured and unstructured credit transfer arrangements as well as some articulation arrangements involving close collaboration in the development of courses.

• There have been recent efforts to improve consistency and efficiency through the establishment of a specific central unit to administer advanced standing.

• The university’s new advanced standing policy covers arrangements for domestic and international credit pathways.

• A central database will record all credit arrangements and monitor enrolment trends and outcomes.

• At least one faculty has a designated person to handle credit transfer arrangements.
5 University of Newcastle

5.1 Background

Focus

This case study examines the partnership between the University of Newcastle and the Hunter Institute of TAFE with specific reference to the credit transfer arrangements negotiated between these institutions. It also addresses the broadening of the partnership arrangements on credit and other matters, and the extension of membership to include North Coast Institute of TAFE and New England TAFE, from 2005.

The University of Newcastle (herein after referred to as the University) is a regional university servicing the central coast of NSW. It has some 23,000 students undertaking a diverse range of university programs. The main campus is within the boundaries of Newcastle. It also operates in a cross-sector environment at Ourimbah on the central coast and is developing a further campus with North Coast Institute of TAFE at Port Macquarie. Further details of the Ourimbah arrangement are included in a vignette later in this report.

The Hunter Institute of TAFE (herein after referred to as Hunter Institute) is one of ten TAFE Institutes in NSW and the largest regional TAFE provider in Australia with a student population of some 50,000 spread over fifteen campuses. The main campus is in central Newcastle. The Hunter Institute provides VTE studies in nine faculties with a significant emphasis on access and general programs.

Both the University and Hunter Institute have credit transfer partnerships with other providers but these are more limited in scope and structure and have not been investigated as part of this case study. It should also be noted that TAFENSW has a centralised system to manage credit transfer across the State but all credit arrangements at the University are handled through the partnership model not this central process. The University’s arrangements are then applicable to any student with the relevant VTE qualification from any TAFE. In this sense, the partnership is supporting a much wider audience of VTE students, not just those from the Hunter Institute.

The partnership has been in operation for over a decade. In that period, there have been a number of iterations and modifications with some periods of intense activity and others with more limited outcomes. The duration of the relationship is a testimony to its strength and to the continuing support by both parties to a shared set of objectives.

Objectives

The formal objectives of the partnership are defined in both the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) agreed in 1999 and, most recently, in the agreed terms of reference for the TAFE-University Co-ordination Committee (TUCC) which is the co-ordinating body for the partner organisations (see below).
The MoU objectives are to:

- promote the Hunter region as a provider of quality education across a broad range of areas from vocational to professional and higher education
- acknowledge that each will recognise the other as the preferred partner in establishing Vocational Education and Training-University relationships.

These objectives were recast in a slightly more elaborate form by the Co-ordination Committee at its 14 March 2006 meeting as being:

To foster and advise on opportunities for educational collaboration and innovation between the University and the Institutes in the Hunter, Central Coast, New England and North Coast regions including:

- the development, monitoring, reporting and improvement of credit transfer and articulation for award holders in each sector wishing to continue with study in the other sector
- the development, monitoring, and reporting of new initiatives in teaching and learning across the sectors, including creation of new program structures which provide for multiple entry and exit pathways along a continuum which involves both TAFE and university awards
- the exploration of other areas of potential co-operation...

While the intent has not changed, the re-defined objectives focus more effectively on monitoring and reporting, as well as giving clearer guidance on the meaning of collaborative education programs.

The unwritten objectives that sit behind those stated above are equally significant. For the University, these include such factors as access and equity, diversity of student profile, maintaining student load (in some areas) and implementing the AVCC policy.

For the Hunter Institute, the partnership is also seen as providing a transparent model for recognition of TAFE studies and enhanced learning opportunities and choices for its students.

Drivers

From the commencement of the partnership in 1996, the common factor which drew the parties together was the regional context. The geography is described as pivotal to this evolving relationship and, as the geographic scope of the University of Newcastle has expanded, so too has its TAFE partner base.

The parties see the development of a strong educational partnership as playing an important role in fostering regional development and in maintaining regional retention of students.

26 Memorandum of Understanding between the University of Newcastle and Hunter Institute of Technology, dated 24 February, 1999, p. 2.

27 TAFE-University Co-ordination Committee, Terms of Reference, a document forming part of the Co-ordination Committee’s Agenda and papers for the meeting held 14 March 2006.
The Hunter region is characterised by high unemployment and a low educational participation rate. In this regard, there are political levers operating at both local and state government level supporting these types of partnerships. There is also a cost factor for the students – it is cheaper to stay in the region. The longer-term benefits for the community of staying local and then gaining employment locally have also been identified. The new Port Macquarie Tertiary Campus and the Ourimbah precinct are manifestations of developing a community-focused education response in this region.

The original partnership focused primarily on Newcastle city and its immediate surrounds, but has expanded to cover the central northern and north coast regions. The recent inclusion of both New England Institute of TAFE and North Coast Institute of TAFE on the TAFE-University Co-ordination Committee (TUCC) demonstrates the expanding scope. It is interesting that both these TAFEs have chosen to work closely with the University of Newcastle rather than forge partnerships with universities in closer proximity. The track record of the University of Newcastle working so closely and effectively with TAFE has been a key factor in the decision by these institutes to enter this particular partnership.

The broader policy context has also been an important factor in both setting up and maintaining the partnership. The original impetus flowed from attendance by the University at an AVCC conference on credit transfer that led to a University-initiated workshop with Hunter Institute. From there, the beginnings of working arrangements emerged. Each development in national policy has also been followed, with the partners seeking to meet or better the policy parameters set. As an example, a key recommendation of the Co-ordination Committee in 2005 was to review arrangements to ensure all the agreements for credit meet the AVCC/AQF Guidelines. Consideration of other important policy directions, such as the Bologna process, the Victorian Credit Matrix and the University Admissions Centre (UAC) Policy, has also informed the Co-ordination Committee’s work.

5.2 Key features of the case study

Terminology
Credit transfer is the main focus and language used in the partnership. Credit transfer provides advanced standing that may be in the form of block, specified or unspecified credit. The term ‘articulation’ appears to be used interchangeably with credit transfer.

Joint development of programs is referred to as integrated models, integrated programs and integrated cross-sectoral delivery which involves delivery by more than one sector.

Models in use
The partnership has been particularly successful, developing credit transfer agreements in 62 bachelor degree programs that encompass 86% of all
undergraduate programs on offer at the University. These credit transfer agreements are across all faculties of the University. The VTE qualifications for which credit is granted include a mix of old and current qualifications, with diplomas being the most widely connected. The mix includes credit for:

- 3 certificate III qualifications
- 28 certificate IV qualifications
- 3 advanced certificates
- 23 associate diplomas
- 80 diplomas
- 19 advanced diplomas.

The breadth and range of credit agreements are an outcome of both the longevity of the relationship and the structures in place to develop credit transfer agreements as discussed below.

The type (specified, unspecified and block) and quantum of credit awarded are variable, depending on the specific and broad equivalences identified between the qualifications. The University is a signatory to a TAFENSW agreement that reflects the AVCC Principles in terms of guidance to credit levels. This means that a diploma is accepted by the University as receiving 33% credit towards a three-year bachelor degree and 25% for a four-year bachelor degree in the same field. This quantum of credit is awarded in most qualifications but may not necessarily be applied wholly towards the first year. In some instances higher credit is provided. Some faculties also award credit for any diploma irrespective of the field. A total of eleven agreements have been made granting a block credit for the first year of a bachelor degree, based on holding a relevant diploma, thus enabling transfer students to move straight into the second year, subject to gaining admission. These credit transfer agreements are in the fields of architecture and construction management, Aboriginal studies, fine arts and nursing.

To date, the focus on ‘integrated models’ has been far less productive, although this may well change in the near future if recommendations of the TUCU are further developed. There have been a number of individual attempts at articulation arrangements involving concurrent studies, such as the Bachelor of Applied Information Technology which was negotiated and implemented at the Ourimbah campus in 2000. This articulation arrangement involved a multi-disciplinary degree program which included one-third applied and vocational focus, delivered by Hunter Institute and studied with higher education subjects. The structure, whilst attractive in design, was fraught with implementation problems and was finally abandoned in favour of a straight degree. A new, jointly developed industrial design program is being offered from 2006. The program is four years in duration.

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29 Figures based on details of credit transfer agreements located on the University of Newcastle website. See: [http://www.newcastle.edu.au/credit/](http://www.newcastle.edu.au/credit/)

30 Ibid.

31 Ibid.
with a nested qualification structure of three exit points (diploma, advanced diploma, bachelor degree). The first three years will be delivered by the Hunter Institute and the fourth year by the University. The program will be managed through a joint management committee.

Development process

Each credit transfer arrangement is developed by a working party comprising relevant discipline-based teaching staff of both the University and the Hunter Institute. Twelve working parties were operating at the time of writing (April, 2006).

The model for development and approval of credit transfer starts with the TUCC identifying priority areas. Each credit transfer working party is then responsible for negotiating an agreed credit transfer outcome, working towards the AVCC Guidelines. The working party reports to the Faculty Curriculum Teaching and Learning Committee which recommends the credit arrangement to the Faculty Board for endorsement and submission to the Pro Vice-Chancellor for approval. Following approval, the outcome is sent back to the TUCC for noting and then forwarded to both the Academic Senate and Institute Board for sign-off and subsequent publication on the University website.

Data on student transfer

The statistics maintained by the University follow the DEST data field requirements and so are subject to the same issues of data integrity. No specific data are kept on credit granted to transferring students with a TAFE qualification. When credit is an agreed value, it is assumed that students who have gained admission with a TAFE award (whether that award is the basis of admission or not) will have received the recognised credit for the award they hold. Data held on students admitted on the basis of a TAFE qualification show that, in the period of the partnership with Hunter Institute:

- total TAFE-sourced enrolments at the University were 2,805 students (1997 to 2005)
- total UAC TAFE admission offers have increased every year (except 2004) with 609 offers in 2005 compared with 166 in 1997
- in 2005, 59% of all TAFE admission students were from the Hunter Institute
- student academic progression rates of TAFE admission students (with a completed TAFE award) are comparable with other student cohorts
- attrition rates of TAFE admission students with completed TAFE awards are 3-6% lower than students admitted on the basis of final year secondary school
- TAFE admission students in 2005 enrolled in 41 different bachelor awards with the highest numbers in nursing, business, teaching/early childhood and management. All of these degrees have credit transfer agreements in place.

These figures suggest that, for the students using this pathway in the Hunter region and for the University receiving them, the benefits are real. There have been increasing numbers of TAFE students gaining admission and, with the likelihood
that a majority are receiving some form of credit, Hunter Institute transfer students are receiving a particular advantage. The data also demonstrate the value to the University through equal performance and higher retention.

**Future arrangements**

The TUCC is looking again at developing more ‘integrated’ models as an area of ‘priority action’. Two papers have been developed and some guiding criteria noted. These include the need to:

- address student and staff issues such as financial, double counting and timetabling
- ensure a balance between competency based/practical and cognitive/higher order learning outcomes
- become complementary not competitive
- allow for long-term planning in both sectors.

In working through the concept, the Committee is considering possible models and potential issues. A working party has been established to take the ideas forward and to develop an initial proposal for consideration at further meetings in 2006. Given the success of the credit transfer approach and the inherent difficulties in any integrated model, some caution has been expressed about this ‘next agenda’.

The TUCC has also called for a review of all credit transfer ‘with a view to aligning existing and future arrangements with AVCC guidelines as a minimum’. This is important, as the process to date has been an add-on model, with outdated qualifications still on the website in conjunction with revised credit outcomes for replacement qualifications. A review of membership of the credit transfer working party is also on the immediate agenda.

**Leadership, governance and co-ordination**

The significant credit transfer achievements of the University-Hunter Institute partnership have been driven through the strategic planning processes of both organisations and the leadership and operational infrastructure that guide and support the relationship.

The partnership has been led and developed through a joint management structure which has evolved from a working party structure to a large co-ordination committee comprising both ‘heads and legs’ and then to the current model which commenced operation in June 2005 following the inclusion of two new TAFE Institutes to broaden the regional scope. This new model splits the work involved in the partnership into a strategic, management and monitoring body, the TAFE-University Co-ordination Committee (TUCC), which is serviced and supported by a number of working groups. The TUCC comprises senior academic and general staff

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32 Integrated models are defined by the TUCC as a cross-sector qualification outcome created collaboratively including joint content and joint delivery which may include guaranteed entry.

33 Agenda for TUCC, 14 March 2006.

34 Agenda, TUCC meeting 14 March, 2006 pp. 3-4.

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from each of the member organisations and reports to the Vice-Chancellor, Institute Directors, Academic Senate and Institute Boards.

The management model allows those with the specific expertise to do the ‘legwork’ in working parties, leaving the TUCC to drive the process and to set directions which are then approved by the highest levels within the respective institutions. The TUCC is serviced by the University Services Division, with meeting papers prepared by this group. Meetings are rotated between partner campuses and locations and the costs of activities are shared.

At the Hunter Institute, the presence of a central office, staffed by designated personnel responsible for all recognition matters including credit transfer and articulation, assists in supporting this end of the partnership, with the Recognition Manager a member of the TUCC.

Although there are many very positive aspects of the University’s approach to credit transfer arrangements, there are also some mitigating factors. These include the:

- continuation of individualised credit offered by some faculties, which is outside the official arrangements and unrecorded
- three layers of credit transfer systems in place at the University (those applying to the TAFE partners, international and private provider partnerships) which may be quite different and the need to systematise these
- cultural change and acceptance of working with TAFE not necessarily filtering through to all University faculty staff.

Monitoring and evaluation

As discussed above, the previous TUCC structure developed a working schedule for monitoring progress of joint activities. This included receiving reports on the progress of credit transfer working parties and other aspects of the MoU such as corporate services projects, educational planning and services contracts, employee relations, finance and systems, and student support. Separate reports relating to admissions data and marketing are also created and considered from time to time. An annual report was published in 2004 outlining credit transfer actions and performance outcomes against the MoU. These annual reports were presented to the Academic Senate of the University and the Institute Board. Reporting also occurs at various service division levels within the partner organisations.

Information management, promotion and marketing

Making the credit transfer arrangements known to prospective students has been a key outcome from the beginning of the partnership. From 1997 to 2002, this credit information was published in a glossy booklet called Moving On which provided readers with information on admission requirements and processes, the AQF, how credit is determined, application forms for credit and details of specific credit awarded for a range of TAFE awards to bachelor degrees. Each year the booklet was updated with the new arrangements negotiated through the partnership.

From 2003, this information was transferred to the University’s website. A poster and brochure were developed to assist the transition from hard copy to virtual information. Only the University site carries the details, with links from the partner
organisations. This ensures a single and up-to-date source that is managed in accordance with the development and approval process outlined earlier.

The information is now promoted as *Getting Ahead*, rather than *Moving On*. Access to the information is relatively easy to navigate, although as with all similar websites it is easier if you know where to start and exactly what you are looking for. Details of credit are provided by clicking on the specific partner organisation name, with TAFENSW being only one of a number of partners listed. The web neither focuses on TAFENSW, in particular, nor mentions the specific relationship with the Hunter Institute (unlike the hard copy publication) because it is intended to relate to students from all TAFE institutes, not just Hunter Institute.

In navigating the partner TAFE websites, the process is more laborious and ‘hidden’. The Hunter Institute website requires a large number of links that focus on ‘recognition’ and finally links back to the University. There is no search function. The North Coast Institute is more direct but also requires linking through ‘recognition’ which is the accepted terminology in TAFENSW covering all forms of credit.

In a report to the March, 2006 meeting of the TUCC from the Marketing Forum, a similar analysis was undertaken to determine the effectiveness of current web communications. The Marketing Forum concluded that it would assist if changes were made to the Hunter Institute site to include a single ‘University/TAFE Articulation Link’ and a homepage link.

These arrangements are also promoted on the new TAFENSW/Universities Credit Transfer and Articulation website which will eventually provide a comprehensive web-based tool that will guide users to information on all arrangements between universities and TAFE in NSW. The new website links to existing web information on the University of Newcastle site.

### 5.3 Summary

The key features of this case study can be summarised as follows:

- The partnership was developed initially between a university and local TAFE.
- The partnership expanded in focus and membership in response to regional education, economic and community needs.
- The partnership is longstanding and there is evidence of maturity and sustainability.
- The partnership is supported at the highest levels of the institutions, and accountability of outcomes is to those levels.
- The partnership is governed by a formal agreement, with objectives that are clearly defined and jointly agreed.
- The partnership is managed through an effective committee and meeting structure.

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The partnership is monitored and evaluated.

Credit transfer arrangements and their related partnerships are evolving and developing in new collaborative directions.

Processes for determining credit transfer and articulation are cross-sector and discipline-based.

Outcomes are formally endorsed and publicised.

Partner information is shared.

National principles have played a role in developments.

Outcomes for students and institutions are demonstrated in terms of the range and scope of credit transfer arrangements across all faculties. TAFE student admission rates are increasing and TAFE students have comparable progress rates and higher retention rates.
6 TAFE SA and South Australia’s Universities

6.1 Background

Focus
This case study examines the formal partnerships between TAFE SA and the three universities located in South Australia: the University of Adelaide; Flinders University; and the University of South Australia (UniSA). Each of these partnerships with TAFE SA has been established in support of a common goal to enhance credit transfer and articulation and other forms of collaboration between the sectors.

TAFE SA is the title used to cover the whole TAFE system in the State of South Australia. This system is made up of three TAFE institutes – South, North and Regional – and four other corporate divisions that have central responsibility for key components of TAFE SA operations. Each of the institutes has a number of campuses (some of which were formerly separate institutes), with TAFE Regional spanning 36 campuses. The total number of students in TAFE SA is in the order of 111,000 (2004).

One of the new corporate divisions in the TAFE SA structure is Educational Services and Programs (ESP) which has among its responsibilities that of managing university partnership arrangements.

This TAFE SA structure was introduced in 2005 as an outcome of a restructure following two major inquiries (refer to section on drivers) and it is having a significant impact on credit transfer arrangements.

The University of Adelaide is the oldest university in South Australia with over 19,000 students (2005). It has had some arrangements with TAFE for structured credit transfer since 1993.

Flinders University is situated on one main campus in Adelaide and has 15,110 students undertaking 166 courses. Credit transfer agreements with TAFE go back to 1996 through some individual faculty arrangements.

The University of South Australia (UniSA) was established in 1991 and currently has some 32,000 students across six campuses. UniSA has a long history of supporting credit transfer, dating back to the 1980s before it was a university. While TAFE SA is a major partner, credit transfer arrangements have also been developed with 58 other organisations including TAFE institutes in other states, private providers, industry organisations and other universities.36

In undertaking this case study, the main focus has been on investigating the perspectives of each partnership with TAFE SA, and TAFE SA’s current objectives and processes for systematising and enhancing these partnerships.

36 Information from UniSA website in link called credit transfer register.
Objectives

The formal objectives of the three partnerships are defined in Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) signed by each university with TAFE SA. The MoUs were drawn up by TAFE SA and each follows a similar wording and format. The first MoU was developed with UniSA in 1992 and is now in its second iteration (valid 2002 to 2007). The MoU with Flinders University was signed in September 2002 and is valid until 2006. The MoU with the University of Adelaide was first signed in 1999, with a further version signed in 2003, and is similarly valid until 2006. Both of these are the subject of re-negotiation and, in the case of the University of Adelaide, the parties are in the process of re-drafting a new agreement valid until 2010.

The objectives of each partnership are spelled out in the following terms:

The institutions recognise the importance of education and training for the State’s economic, social and cultural development. Mindful of their respective missions, they have agreed to maintain and extend co-operation and mutual assistance to improve quality, efficiency, equity and access in providing tertiary education and training in South Australia, and marketing education and training outside the State.\(^{37}\)

The objectives of improving quality, efficiency, equity and access are met through co-operation in a number of areas including:

- articulation (including credit transfer)
- program delivery
- research and development
- marketing
- strategic planning
- professional development.

In consultation discussions with all three universities, the objective of access and equity and meeting the community’s educational needs, especially in terms of access by rural communities, was highlighted.

UniSA also identified a further objective of ‘creating a marketing advantage’, based on its long-term commitment to cross-sector engagement and more recent initiatives (discussed below under key features).\(^{38}\) This objective focuses on making UniSA a first choice destination for TAFE students.

TAFE SA, the common partner, also shares the objectives of improving quality, efficiency, equity and access. The development of more seamless and systematic arrangements for credit transfer and articulation with all three partners is a separate key objective which is linked to the broader strategic focus of re-establishing TAFE in SA as a single system and as ‘the community’s principal VTE provider’.\(^{39}\)

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\(^{37}\) Wording of Section 3 of MoUs under the heading Intent. UniSA has additional objective of ‘increasing access to post-compulsory education and training for Indigenous Australians’.

\(^{38}\) Consultation meeting with UniSA representatives, 10 March, 2006.

Drivers

As with all the case studies, contextual factors play an important role in both establishing and enhancing partnership arrangements. The particular geographic features in this study include a single centralised metropolis with a very large regional base – meeting the education and access needs of that regional base was identified by the parties as a key consideration in the partnership rationale.

Government economic and educational policy directions have also been a significant driver. For the last four years, the South Australian Government has been developing a number of policy responses designed to support ‘a highly skilled and adaptable workforce that will provide South Australia with a measurable comparative advantage in the knowledge-based global economy’.  

The State is under-educated at all qualification levels relative to the Australian average. The SA Government has embarked on a number of radical changes to address this gap and to provide a comprehensive strategy for ‘workforce development’ to meet South Australia’s future economic development needs.

An inquiry on TAFE governance conducted in 2002 highlighted structural issues within TAFE. A later discussion paper:

… pointed to the deleterious effects of what a number of Government reviews have described as ‘administrative silos’, where institutional borders develop a life of their own and inhibit co-operation and concentration on the needs of clients. Its remedy was to propose a collegial management structure at all levels in the department and especially in the governance of TAFE Institutes.

In responding to both the Ministerial Skills Inquiry and the TAFE Governance Inquiry, the Government developed a new configuration for TAFE that would enhance ‘the TAFE system’s ethos of collaboration and service’. Both reports strongly emphasised the need for wider and improved pathways to skills development with schools, universities and community-based learning programs.

The TAFE SA re-structure, implemented in 2005, has re-shaped TAFE, not only in reducing the number of institutes from eight to three but, more importantly, in creating a new management model where competition has been replaced by collaboration. Individual institute responses to program delivery are now managed by a more cohesive and centralised approach.

These changes impact significantly on the TAFE SA University partnerships and have provided the impetus for a new and increased emphasis.

40 Ibid. p. 41.
41 Term used in Ministerial Skills Inquiry as ‘overarching concept’ to develop required State strategies for growth and development.
44 Ibid. p. 8.
The restructuring of TAFE SA provides a lot more leverage. The collaborative model makes managing our relationship with the three universities more effective, particularly in working towards increased systemisation.\textsuperscript{45}

The previous competitive model worked against developing any form of state-wide response, with individual TAFEs each seeking to develop ‘special arrangements’. Many of these were never recorded and were often inconsistent with existing agreements for credit transfer.

The re-structure has also meant changes in the way TAFE implements Training Packages and other accredited courses, with centralised learning and assessment design replacing the individualised institute approaches of the past. Centralisation establishes a common elective structure which all TAFEs apply in delivering the program, thus establishing a firmer base for cross-credits. This work is also located in the same division as the management of the partnerships, enabling staff to plan program delivery within the context of credit transfer and articulation initiatives.

The universities have also responded to the Government’s policy direction of improving pathways, with UniSA taking the initiative in enhancing its own agreements with TAFE SA, also discussed below.

For Flinders University, an additional driver is its admissions system which includes a sub-quota for TAFE/VTE students. The sub-quota varies depending on the degree but was set at 6\% in 2003/4 and raised to 8\% of all admissions in 2005/6.\textsuperscript{46}

6.2 \textbf{Key features of the case study}

Terminology

Both ‘articulation’ and ‘credit transfer’ are terms applied in the South Australian context. In the MoUs, the focus is on ‘articulation’ which also includes credit transfer.

Articulation is the formal linkage between different levels of credentials, or credentials in different fields. Articulation arrangements allow for horizontal or vertical movement between academic programs, and may involve design of programs for ‘end-on’ linkage, or credit transfer for students, or common sections within different programs.\textsuperscript{47}

The UniSA policy reflects articulation as:

\ldots the specific design of education and training programs in ways which facilitate and maximise opportunities for credit transfer and/or for students to proceed from one level of education/training to the next (not necessarily with credit) whilst credit transfer is the granting of advanced standing \ldots on the basis of previous study undertaken in another institution.\textsuperscript{48}

\textsuperscript{45}Ms Susan Young, Director, Education Services and Programs, TAFE SA, Consultation 09 March 2006.

\textsuperscript{46}This point was made by Flinders University representatives at consultations on 09 March, 2006.

\textsuperscript{47}Definition used in all MoUs.

\textsuperscript{48}Recognition of prior learning for credit, exemption and studies-in-lieu, Policy No A-13-10, UniSA, See: \texttt{http://www.unisa.edu.au/policies/academic/A13.asp}
Credit may be awarded as block, specified or unspecified. Both Flinders University and the University of Adelaide use the term ‘credit transfer’ in their policies and practice.

Models in use

Most arrangements developed under the respective MoUs involve credit transfer, although some examples of articulation models exist (involving co-design and development). The range of credit transfer agreements is varied and the credit outcomes variable, with the UniSA/TAFE SA partnership providing the most extensive and the most consistent. All the universities reference the current AVCC guidelines as the basis of their determination of credit outcomes.

UniSA

Given the longevity of the partnership between UniSA and TAFE SA, it is not surprising that this university has the most credit transfer agreements in place, in both number (359) and range of discipline areas covered (26). These include a range of credit transfer agreements covering Training Package qualifications as well as a large number of TAFE SA and other TAFE accredited courses. The largest numbers of credit transfer arrangements with Training Packages are in business services and information technology.

In 2005, a new phase in the partnership was signalled with the signing of a specific agreement with TAFE SA to provide ‘block credit transfer in every undergraduate program, based on the learning outcomes and levels of VTE awards and higher education bachelor degrees within the AQF.’

This new UniSA credit framework is based on a set of ten agreed principles which will guide credit transfer within the University for the foreseeable future and which were implemented with TAFE SA in August 2005. It is a three-tier credit system that establishes minimum block credit granted on the basis of the AQF qualification held by a student and issued by TAFE SA and additional block credit (to a maximum) based on similarities or equivalences in curriculum/learning content between the qualifications, with further capacity for individualised credit based on specific units a student may have taken.

The minimum credit applies to AQF qualifications ranging from certificate IV to associate degree. The minimum block credit awarded is:

- certificate IV: 4.5 units of credit towards any 2, 3 or 4-year university award
- diploma: 9 units of credit towards any 2, 3 or 4-year university award
- advanced diploma: 13.5 units of credit towards any 2, 3 or 4-year university award

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49 These terms are also defined in above policy.
50 University of South Australia, internal Memorandum to the Academic Board, May 2005.
• associate degree: 13.5 units of credit towards any 2, 3 or 4-year university award.\textsuperscript{51}

The basis for granting the designated minimum block credit is recognition by UniSA of the generic outcomes achieved by the student in completing these TAFE issued AQF qualifications. These generic outcomes are identified by UniSA as communication, numeracy and information literacy skills\textsuperscript{52} - those skills encompassed by Key Competencies/Employability Skills in Training Package qualifications. The minimum guaranteed credit in this framework assumes increasing development of these generic skills with each qualification level in the AQF.

Additional credit may be granted ‘in related programs where the content is sufficiently similar’. A ceiling has been placed on the amount of additional credit to a maximum that corresponds with the AVCC and AQF Guidelines.\textsuperscript{53} This credit will be granted as specified block credit with further capacity for additional credit determined on an individual basis for ‘relevant TAFE subjects’.\textsuperscript{54}

This new agreement was developed in order to:

• maintain the market position of UniSA in this area
• respond to MCEETYA Guidelines
• take advantage of the TAFE re-structure which enables the establishment of ‘global arrangements’
• minimise time and resources of the organisations in negotiating credit.

The approach paves the way as a credit regime providing guaranteed credit for all former TAFE students with completed awards, while also ensuring integrity and appropriateness of further credit based on how closely the TAFE program content relates to the university program content.

Provision of the minimum block credit commenced in 2006 and roll-out of the combined minimum and maximum credit will occur progressively as new or revised credit agreements are made with TAFE SA. While supportive of the new agreement, some UniSA academics raised concerns in the consultation discussions about application of substantial block credit (such as a full year), which ‘can be disadvantageous to a student, particularly in a tightly focused discipline degree’.

The focus on articulation models has been less and ‘fell away with the introduction of Training Packages’. Interest is emerging again, primarily because of the re-structure of TAFE and centralisation of the learning design process within the ESP

\textsuperscript{51} The number of unit points required for successful completion of each award varies - a two-year award = 54 unit points; a three-year award = 108 unit points; a four-year award = 144 unit points.
\textsuperscript{52} UniSA Memorandum, Op.cit.
\textsuperscript{53} The agreement provides a maximum of 33\% credit for a diploma and 50\% credit for an advanced diploma towards a three-year undergraduate degree. Other maximums are set for two and four-year undergraduate programs and for different AQF awards.
\textsuperscript{54} UniSA Memorandum.
division, which can build in necessary prerequisites, supports and collaboration with the universities when programs are designed.\textsuperscript{55}

While admission is a separate process, another aspect of UniSA’s approach is to market itself as a university that accepts and wants TAFE students:

\textit{Studying at TAFE is one of the easiest pathways towards a UniSA degree. Many UniSA undergraduate programs have places reserved for TAFE students.}\textsuperscript{56}

\textbf{Flinders University}

The formal partnership between Flinders University and TAFE SA is less than four years old, although some credit transfer agreements were in place prior to the signing of the MoU in 2002. A large number of agreements were negotiated that year with further new agreements negotiated each year since, totalling 70 in all (end 2005). These credit transfer agreements cover 62 separate TAFE issued AQF qualifications with credit into 24 bachelor degrees.\textsuperscript{57} The quantum of credit varies but is commonly 33\% for a diploma and 50\% for an advanced diploma into a three-year bachelor degree.

Most credit is granted through determination of the content/curriculum relationships between awards, but generic credit is granted towards two degree programs on the basis of holding any diploma/advanced diploma and to another degree program on the basis of holding any business/management diploma/advanced diploma. These generic credit agreements provide up to one or two years of credit.

The largest number of agreements are in the IT and business fields. There is also an emphasis on community services and nursing, including Aboriginal health and Aboriginal community organisations, with credit provided to certificate III level. The agreements cover eight Training Packages.

The university’s policy on credit levels allows for no more than two-thirds of credit to be in the form of specified or block credit and no more than one-third to be in the form of unspecified credit. In addition, at least 36 units of study must be completed at the University for an award to be issued.

Despite the existence of defined credit transfer agreements with specified credit outcomes, Flinders University staff indicated that the process of granting credit still involved interview with the students to determine which modules were held by the students and therefore how much credit would be appropriate. The constant changes to VTE qualifications, especially to Training Package qualifications, and the flexible nature of these qualifications mean that students may not hold all of the competencies/modules covered in the agreement. It is therefore still necessary to assess each case individually.

One longstanding dual sector award has been developed between Flinders and TAFE SA in business/arts. This involves selecting one of five nominated Advanced

\textsuperscript{55} Consultation with UniSA staff, 10 March 2006.

\textsuperscript{56} UniSA website: \url{http://www.uinsa.edu.au/future students/}

\textsuperscript{57} Data on number of credit transfer agreements in place is based on Flinders University brochure: \textit{TAFE entry and credit transfer, 2006 pathways to Flinders}; the Flinders University database on agreements.

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Diplomas in Business which is studied concurrently with the Bachelor of Arts over four years instead of five. Students are enrolled concurrently through SATAC and must meet the admission requirements. The dual program suffers from the same logistical problems identified in the other case studies.

Flinders University is focusing more directly on the TAFE sector as a source of future students and, like UniSA, is pitching more directly to this group in terms of the options available.58

University of Adelaide

Credit transfer agreements with this university have been more limited and sporadic. A total of eighteen agreements are registered, with credit granted varying from one subject to two years of block credit into a bachelor degree. The latter was negotiated last year and is in rural business management at the Roseworthy campus.

Consultations with staff of the University of Adelaide indicated that developing more agreements was important but that credit transfer for TAFE studies was not ‘suitable’ in all areas. Like at Flinders University, staff also assess each application for credit to determine the final quantum, even where a standardised agreement is in place. This is seen as necessary to ensure underpinning subjects have been covered in the particular TAFE program structure undertaken by the student. The new arrangements in TAFE SA should overcome the need for this resource intensive process.

Staff also indicated there is a lot of individual credit negotiated at the faculty level. This may involve exemptions for a unit or for a small part of a unit such as an exemption from doing a particular assignment. Systematising this individual credit through credit agreements is seen as necessary.

Articulation (dual/integrated award) is currently limited to one model in dentistry/oral health. This is a new, concurrent program (Advanced Diploma/Bachelor in Oral Health) with joint enrolment and has the common problems of managing the logistics of the study program and administrative requirements.

Future arrangements

All three universities will continue to extend their credit transfer agreements with TAFE SA. In the case of UniSA, this will be undertaken in the context of the 2005 framework agreement. Each will also be looking at the co-operative ventures with TAFE SA and the development of new dual/integrated sector qualifications in a number of fields such as IT, creative arts and tourism. Flinders University is also in the process of streamlining its credit transfer register to improve the accuracy of information and its sign off process for new agreements which will now go through the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic). The University of Adelaide is considering new agreements in engineering and architecture and is of the view that the agreement with TAFE SA ‘will only strengthen over time’.

58 Flinders brochure, Ibid.
For TAFE SA, the focus is on systematising and streamlining the current management process for the development schedule, sign-off and recording of the agreements on to the TAFE SA credit transfer database and web published Credit Transfer Directory. The vision is to create a comprehensive, user-friendly and accessible (using multiple access points) web directory that is constantly updated through a single source at the ESP. At the moment multiple sources feed into the directory using different data forms and templates. This leads to inconsistencies in the data sets and published information between TAFE SA and the individual universities.

**Development process**

The current development process is undertaken in accordance with the MoUs which provide for a management committee to initiate, develop and recommend specific programs and projects. In reality, the initiation may come from a number of sources within TAFE SA or the university.

Primary responsibility for determining credit outcomes rests with each of the universities, with relevant staff of the identified faculty making academic judgments about what is appropriate. The universities described this as a difficult and resource intensive task, made more burdensome by the vast volumes of undiluted material (especially if using Training Packages) that must be waded through to determine content relationships. Assistance is provided in the form of professional development by TAFE SA staff from the Education Services and Programs Division who go out to the universities and explain VTE models and structures such as the AQF, AQF Guidelines on credit, Training Packages, competency standards and assessment. At Flinders University and UniSA, specific faculty staff are nominated to handle credit arrangements which assists in continuity and provides greater consistency.

However, there is still an issue about the decision-making process which is solely in the hands of the universities. This is off-set to some degree by the fact that all agreements are examined by division staff prior to sign off by the Director of the ESP, enabling further negotiation if the outcomes appear too low or inconsistent with other universities in the same field. The new UniSA agreement also provides for involvement of a TAFE representative ‘to assist in maximising credit for TAFE entrants’.

The new TAFE SA credit transfer database will revolutionise both the initiation and the process of development. When finalised later this year, it will provide a tool that triggers a new or revised credit transfer agreement every time a new or revised course or qualification is approved for delivery by TAFE SA. Details of the new course/qualification will be sent to all three universities at the same time. These details will include a course outline structure with the core and agreed electives for delivery across TAFE SA, as well as contact hours. This defined program structure is expected to overcome the problems encountered in working directly with the Training Packages. The universities will still need to look at the unit content which they will access via directed links to the National Training Information Service (NTIS).

UniSA has also approved a new process for determining additional credit above the guaranteed minimum block credit as part of the new credit framework which involves examining the packaging requirements of VTE qualifications, including
core units, any discipline specific electives required and all other ‘free’ electives to establish capacity for further block credit up to the maximum. Once established and placed on the UniSA database, this credit will be granted automatically to students with evidence of achievement of the VTE qualification.

Data on student transfer

Statistics provided by UniSA at the consultation show some growth in the number of students admitted to the three universities on the basis of their TAFE qualification over the period 1999 to 2004, rising from 627 to 864 (and increase of 37.7%), subject to year-on-year fluctuations. UniSA consistently has the biggest share of TAFE transfer students, in the order of 78% to 80% of the total.

The figures show considerable growth in TAFE-based admissions at Flinders University in 2002, following the signing of the MoU, increasing by 42% over the previous year before falling again in the two years following. Given the significant promotion of Flinders University to TAFE students for enrolment in 2006, it will be interesting to see if this figure has lifted again.

Students admitted on another basis but citing a TAFE qualification as their highest qualification are almost double the number admitted on the basis of a TAFE qualification, standing at 1,647 across the three universities in 2004 with UniSA taking 65% of these students. Unfortunately, no data was available on admissions with credit, as this information is not collected. Information is also not collected on TAFE student progression and retention rates, although the University of Adelaide did offer anecdotal evidence in the consultations that ‘these students perform well’.

Leadership, governance and co-ordination

All three universities, along with TAFE SA, are guided in their actions by their strategic planning frameworks. The strategic focus at TAFE SA has been addressed earlier. The work on credit transfer and articulation carried out by the ESP division is critically linked to the overall strategic planning process for TAFE SA and VTE more broadly.

The Flinders University Strategic Plan 2006-2010 addresses collaboration with TAFE SA at a number of levels, including the setting of strategic goals, objectives and strategies. These include specific reference to:

- co-operating with TAFE to publicise the range of options and articulation arrangements
- facilitating credit transfer, joint programs and other initiatives with TAFE that provide for students from a variety of backgrounds and for lifelong learning

Action plans to meet these objectives address the current activities of Flinders University in this area.

The Statement of Strategic Intent 2010, which defines UniSA’s strategic directions, emphasises collaboration as a focus in the development of new knowledge by the University. Specific mention of partnerships with other education providers is set

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out in the University’s Corporate Plan 2006-2008. The University of Adelaide does not specifically address collaboration or partnerships in its strategic plan but reference is made in the Learning and Teaching Strategic Plan 2004-2008 that addresses collaboration and the development of block credit.

All the universities have credit transfer policies. UniSA’s dates from 1993 and has been amended eleven times.

Management responsibility for credit transfer and articulation within all three universities is now at Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic). Sign off in TAFE SA is at Director level.

The partnerships are managed under the MoUs that provide for a management/steering committee comprising three representatives from each partner organisation. These committees meet irregularly. Day-to-day management is carried out by ESP, TAFE SA. Each of the universities nominates staff to manage and build the relationship, although in the case of the University of Adelaide this is currently a temporary project position.

The Director of the ESP also sits on the TAFE/HE Committee that reports to the Strategic Teaching and Learning Reference Group, which in turn reports to the Minister.

**Monitoring and evaluation**

This aspect of the arrangements is the weakest, and neither the consultations nor background research found evidence of any systematic monitoring or evaluation. The MoUs provide for an annual plan of activities but no reference is made to monitoring or reporting of outcomes. Although each party would have to report against corporate and operational plans, the outcomes of these evaluations were not provided in the course of the case study.

**Information management, promotion and marketing**

Each of the universities and TAFE SA record the credit transfer agreements on their management information systems. TAFE SA, UniSA and Flinders University provide this information on their respective websites. The TAFE SA web directory is comprehensive, covering all agreements with their university partners.

As discussed earlier, the TAFE SA management information system is being substantially modified and improved to enhance linkages with the university partners and to increase transparency. This will feed directly to the TAFE SA credit transfer web directory.60

The website provides names and contact details for relevant TAFE SA staff and contact details for the three universities and then links to details of current arrangements with each of the universities. The material is provided in the form of a spreadsheet covering the TAFE/national code, university course, credit granted, date of agreement and any conditions.

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The UniSA website is also navigated easily linked by ‘Future Students’ on the home page to ‘TAFE applicants’ to ‘Pathways’ which then links to two sources of information. The first is a comprehensive stand-alone web publication promoting the particular partnership with TAFE SA. *Pathways from TAFE SA to UniSA 2006 Experience the difference* is well designed and attractive, pitched directly at TAFE students and encourages selection of UniSA as their destination university. It includes a welcome from the Vice-Chancellor, a calendar of events related to enrolment, explanation of the new agreement for minimum block credit, details of credit by discipline area as well as financial information and study options. It is a complete promotion package which markets UniSA as a university where ‘learning is based on real world experience’ and a continuation of TAFE studies.

The other information source on the UniSA web is the credit transfer register with a search engine that covers all the credit transfer partnerships at UniSA. It also links back to the *Pathways* publication, application forms for credit and RPL policy.

The Flinders University website has a similar navigation process but with direct access from the homepage through the link ‘TAFE to Uni’. This leads to a web page marketing the University directly to TAFE students and providing broad information about degree options and credit. Information explaining credit transfer, how to apply, contact names for every bachelor degree, credit transfer details and entry information can be accessed following the links.

The two features that stand out in these websites are: the broader marketing focus which encourages TAFE students specifically as a target audience; and the range of information covered around the credit transfer agreements.

Flinders University has also produced its material on TAFE entry and credit transfer for 2006 in hard copy as a glossy brochure *Pathways to Flinders*, and in 2006 sent a letter to all TAFE students who were successful in gaining admission explaining the availability of credit transfer. These materials will be produced again in 2007.

The University of Adelaide also provides accessible information through its website via the Future Students link from the homepage. The material is more limited, with a focus on information rather on promotion. Details of credit available are through a link back to the TAFE SA website.

One of the considerations for the future is the viability of three separate websites covering the partnerships and keeping these current with all links active.

**Issues raised**

Throughout the consultations a number of external factors and issues were raised with the project team as difficulties that impact on the agreements. These include:

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that dual enrolled students and those granted partial credit within a year are then not classified as full-time do not qualify for Austudy

there is too much flexibility in qualification packaging, including inconsistency in size and depth of units of competency, making it harder to determine qualification equivalences/relationships

the process is too cumbersome for a university lecturer to wade through three or more volumes of Training Package material to match against a university course

there are gaps in knowledge content in current Training Packages that were previously covered in TAFE curriculum – accounting, chemistry, maths were cited as examples

structural differences in design – industry focus versus discipline focus

professional accreditation necessitating more prerequisites for university degree (unless clearly defined in TAFE content, credit cannot be granted)

that knowledge is dispersed across a number of units of competency rather than in one succinct module which is easier for universities to match.

Some of these issues will be addressed through the new centralised implementation model for Training Packages in TAFE SA which standardises program delivery. Other issues are broader and beyond the scope of the immediate parties.

Non-graded competency assessment was also raised as an issue by the University of Adelaide and Flinders University.

The frequency of changes in VTE presented a common problem. All the universities believe stability is essential. The processes involved are too resource intensive to be continually reviewing arrangements. Five-year endorsement of reviewed Training Packages and the systematisation of the initiation process by TAFE SA will assist but the new developments in VTE of Skills and Qualifications Frameworks may add to the concerns.

### 6.3 Summary

The key features of this case study can be summarised as follows:

- An individual partnership with one university has been extended to encompass the whole university sector in a state.
- Re-organisation of TAFE and extension to embrace all universities creates capacity for system-wide approaches.
- Individual partnerships with each university allow for responsiveness to specific partnership needs and capacity for extended or innovative approaches (such as minimum guaranteed block credit).
- First partnership is longstanding and there is evidence of maturity, growth and sustainability.
- All partnerships are supported at the highest levels, and accountability of outcomes is to those levels.
- Partnerships are governed by formal agreements.
- Objectives are clearly defined and jointly agreed.
• Partnerships are managed through a committee structure.
• Partnerships are evolving and developing in new, collaborative directions with increased emphasis on integrated/dual awards.
• New TAFE management system for initiating credit transfer and reviewing existing credit transfer will streamline the process and ensure information to students is up-to-date.
• Development of a centralised delivery program for Training Packages should address university concerns of too much flexibility and inconsistencies in Training Package design.
• Specific agreement with UniSA is a significant achievement and a potential model for elsewhere.
• Determination of discipline-related credit transfer is carried out by the universities with feedback from TAFE SA (new UniSA agreement will move to joint determination).
• Outcomes are formally agreed by each organisation and are publicised.
• UniSA and Flinders University approach to promotion is targeted and positive.
• Agreements apply national AVCC/AQF principles.
• Outcomes for students and institutions are demonstrable but variable between the different partner universities (in terms of range and scope of credit transfer arrangements).
• Partnerships are valued and commitment to sustainability is evident by all.
7 Swinburne University of Technology

7.1 Background

Focus

This case study focuses on arrangements for credit transfer and articulation at Swinburne University of Technology (SUT), a dual sector institution located in Melbourne, Victoria.

SUT is one of five dual sector universities in Victoria. It operates as a single entity managed by a governing council, with a Higher Education division and a TAFE division on each of its six campuses. The University was established in 1992 through the merger of Swinburne Institute of Technology, Swinburne College of TAFE and Prahran College of TAFE and provides educational services in nine main fields of study. It has some 14,900 higher education students and more than twice that number of TAFE student enrolments (41,350 students in 2004).

This case study explores how SUT addresses its dual sector status and if, and how, this impacts on arrangements for credit transfer and other cross-sectoral initiatives.

Objectives

Formal objectives in relation to credit transfer and articulation are set against the background of SUT’s purpose, objects and strategic directions. Unlike the other case studies, all specific objectives for credit transfer and articulation are defined within the broader strategic focus of the University as a dual sector institution.

Within this context, a number of specific objectives have been identified in recent and current planning documents. These include to:

- increase to 400 students the number of Swinburne TAFE students transferring to higher education at Swinburne
- further develop flexible student pathways
- increase credit transfer by 10% and market to domestic and international students
- develop agreed, clear articulation pathways
- continue direct entry offers as part of objective of increased domestic demand
- develop transition support for transferring students
- strengthen select associate degrees
- increase employment rates of higher education students through concurrent enrolment in TAFE studies.

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Drivers

The most significant driver in this case study is the dual sector focus and structure of the University. This is both an external and internal driver. The external driver of dual sector status has created a number of internal drivers aimed at maximising the advantage provided by operating as a dual sector institution.

The establishment of dual sector entities flowed from a mix of Commonwealth and state reforms and initiatives in the 1980s and early 1990s. The purpose of establishing SUT was to ‘improve access to university education in the outer eastern region of Melbourne’.

The Act under which SUT was established lists one of its objects as:

... the provision of a multi-level system of post-secondary education programs relevant to the needs of the community covering a wide range of fields and levels from basic trade to post-doctoral studies with provision for recognition of prior learning and flexibility of transition between programs.

The dual sector status of the University provides an ideal environment to drive credit transfer and other cross-sectoral initiatives, but the environment itself is not enough to ensure this object of the University is met as a matter of course. As stated by its Vice-Chancellor, it also requires significant institutional will.

The reality of being a dual sector institution means that cross-sector education initiatives have been made part of the core vision of the University. This vision is currently expressed in the Statement of Direction 2015 which sets out three key guiding themes for the University: to be entrepreneurial in work, international in outlook and inter-sectoral in approach. The inter-sectoral focus was also a key goal of the previous Statement of Direction 2010 which had five major goals, including:

... capitalising on the advantages presented by operating at both the vocational education and training levels and the higher education level in order to provide students, industry and business with manifold options.

The triennial University Plan, which is the top-level plan for the University, and individual division, group and University-wide plans all reflect the inter-sectoral focus and define specific inter-sectoral objectives against which reports are made. As part of these planning arrangements, a central master plan has been developed in support of what is called the ‘Inter-sectoral Advantage’. This Master Plan addresses inter-sectoral development in curriculum, research, structure and communication, collaboration among staff, enhancing inter-sectoral advantages for students and inter-sectoral collaboration with industry.

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65 Swinburne University of Technology Act, 1992 Clause 4, p. 4.

66 From speech by Ian Young, Vice-Chancellor, SUT, entitled ‘Bridging the Gap’ for BHERT, 18 May, 2005.

67 SUT - Intersectoral Strategic Development Plan 2001-2003, internal document provided for purposes of the case study.
Arising from the experience of dual sector status has also come a recognition in SUT that ‘combining vocational and higher education elements in its programs provides staff and students with enhanced opportunities for achieving relevant and customised education choices,’ and that these choices can improve employability of graduates. This recognition is itself a powerful driver in supporting new and ongoing inter-sectoral developments.

Another driver is student load. Similar to the universities in the other case studies and elsewhere, the current downturn in overall student demand requires the development of appropriate strategies to maintain student load and thus government funding in the Higher Education division of SUT. This is a cyclical driver and also depends on government decisions regarding load categories and changes to categories. For SUT, TAFE ‘articulants’ provide an important source of capable higher education students as well as the advantage of having a ready pool of internal students. This has led to deliberate policy intervention to increase TAFE ‘articulants’ with the aim of developing a balanced mix of admissions from school leavers, TAFE applicants and other students.

7.2 Key features of the case study

Terminology

An important term that underpins all related terms used at SUT is ‘inter-sectoral’. This term is preferred over ‘dual sector’ or ‘cross-sector’ because it denotes collaboration, co-operation and cohesiveness.

Both ‘articulation’ and ‘credit transfer’ are terms used in the SUT context. Credit transfer is defined as ‘the granting of recognition by universities for previous study and/or experience, in the form of an exemption from certain course/program requirements’. The term tends to be used interchangeably with the term ‘advanced standing’ which means ‘units of previous study are recognised for the purposes of another qualification and credited to that qualification.’ Although the former definition reflects an understanding that includes experience, the general approach at SUT is to grant credit for previous formal studies.

Articulation is understood to refer to ‘the development of closely integrated curriculum that allows movement between courses’. Within the SUT context, the term ‘inter-sectoral articulation’ is used to refer to student progression ‘from one award course to another and from one education and training sector to another, with some credit’. Inter-sectoral courses are referred to as dual awards which may be concurrent or sequential and which are designed to link and integrate two courses which are complementary.

69 Ibid. p.5.
70 Ibid. p. 4.
71 SUT Credit Transfer Guide, See: http://www.swinburne.edu.au
74 SUT Policy Framework for Dual Awards.
Models in use

Credit transfer

Credit transfer arrangements cover approximately 50 separate VTE qualifications from SUT with credit into a relevant SUT bachelor award and they address most of the key fields of education or disciplines provided at SUT including: business, accounting, finance and human resources; liberal arts; environmental management; hospitality; tourism; IT and multimedia; laboratory operations; sport and recreation; and applied languages.

The majority of structured credit arrangements are between advanced diplomas and bachelor awards. The lowest AQF qualification for which credit is granted is a certificate IV. The agreements cover a mix of old and current diploma and advanced diploma qualifications, with credit of generally one to 1.5 years into the relevant bachelor program. SUT has a credit limit of 1.5 years for an advanced diploma on the grounds that it is a different qualification from the first two years of a bachelor degree, and so is not fully equivalent.

The agreed credit provision is applied equally to holders of the same qualification from another TAFE or VTE provider. The agreed credit level is usually expressed as a maximum value which enables the higher education faculty some flexibility in awarding credit. In addition to these University-wide noted and publicised agreements, there are a large number of ‘individual’ credit transfer precedents in place. At present, these are not captured systematically at the institutional level, although at the Lilydale campus they are documented in an Exemption Precedents File that is updated annually. Lilydale was a separate division until the restructure in 2005/6 and so developed its own approach to credit transfer, with resultant differentials in scope and outcomes.

There are also a number of agreements between SUT’s Higher Education division and other education providers, with a significant emphasis on overseas arrangements. Of the 105 partner organisations listed on the University’s website Credit Transfer Guide, 82 are international in origin. Of the 20 external domestic partners, eleven agreements have been made with other Victorian TAFEs and eight are with private providers operating mainly in Victoria. All of the agreements with other Victorian TAFEs are in IT only. This is also the main focus of the private provider arrangements.

Articulation

The development of innovative inter-sectoral curriculum programs is one of six University strategies in support of ‘the Inter-sectoral Advantage’. SUT has identified a range of different options for possible articulation models, including dual awards, nested programs, a common first year, integrated disciplines, bridging programs, skills formation workshops and successive programming.75

Current operation of dual awards is fairly limited and includes four inter-sectoral graduate certificates covering applied science, business (HR management) and disaster management. One joint graduate diploma in the field of disaster management is also offered. Three undergraduate dual, concurrent awards are

offered at the Lilydale campus and a dual sector award in community services/social sciences has also been accredited.76

The provision of dual awards offered with concurrent studies at the Lilydale campus has raised similar problems to those experienced in some of the other case studies. These include such issues as timetabling, transition problems, administration of student enrolments and assessment records, additional work for academics to support the TAFE students, and students not always understanding their status. To address these problems, the three existing programs are moving to an end-on model, with transition support mechanisms for transferring students.

The introduction of associate degrees is another development leading to further articulation arrangements. SUT has supported implementation of these new awards and, although they are accredited through higher education, they can be jointly developed and delivered by the two divisions as well as by the TAFE or Higher Education divisions acting alone. These awards will fully articulate into the third year of an appropriate bachelor degree, with the equivalent of two years’ credit. So far, three associate degrees have been developed and more are under development.

Admission

A key aspect of SUT’s inter-sectoral approach is its general support for providing pathways into higher education for students from the TAFE sector, with DEST admissions data demonstrating success of this policy in practice.

In 2004, this approach was significantly enhanced through the establishment of a direct entry scheme for SUT TAFE students interested in moving into SUT higher education. The direct entry process has enabled SUT TAFE students to gain admission into various higher education courses without going through the VTAC admissions process, while also obtaining credit for relevant TAFE studies.

This policy was introduced in part to provide an entry mechanism that gave SUT TAFE students preferential treatment and also as a means of maintaining student load. The direct entry strategy was seen as a vehicle that would demonstrate how ‘the university has explicit mechanisms to ensure articulation/credit transfer of our own student cohort’.77 The scheme was introduced for mid-year entry in 2004 and led to 246 new higher education entrants accepted on this basis. The process in 2005 was streamlined, with TAFE students encouraged to apply on-line through an expression of interest, with offers co-ordinated through individual faculties. The number of acceptances in 2005 for 2006 study was 328. The scheme is without a quota to ‘enable flexibility in decision-making’.

76 The three dual sector courses are the:
- Diploma of Hospitality (Management) articulating with a Bachelor of Business (Tourism Management)
- Advanced Diploma Business (Marketing) articulating with a Bachelor of Business
- Advanced Diploma in Accounting articulating with a Bachelor of Business (Accounting).

The first of these is a dual award with diploma students gaining eight exemptions which means the two awards are completed in four years. The second model is nested with multiple entry and exit points from certificate III to bachelor degree. The third incorporates the Diploma of Accounting within the advanced diploma and then provides a bachelor degree outcome after one further year.

77 SUT Industry Advisory Committee, Minutes of Meeting 23/06/04.
Future arrangements

In relation to credit transfer, the key focus in the immediate future is to develop and further extend current arrangements on a systematic basis using accreditation of new or revised courses as the trigger point. The requirements for accreditation of any course at SUT now include the need to identify credit transfer provision. Over time, the effect will be that all higher education courses at the University will include structured credit transfer arrangements.

The re-organisation of the Higher Education division into five faculties operating in accordance with a new Curriculum Framework, that involves a common structure of majors and minors (to be implemented from 2005 to 2010), should also enhance opportunities for credit transfer and articulation initiatives. Credit for TAFE programs into higher education graduate certificates and diplomas is also on the future agenda.

In terms of articulation, a number of initiatives are underway in 2006. These include:

- rationalisation of different articulation/inter-sectoral models
- continuing development in designated areas, such as business
- development of new inter-sectoral programs in earmarked areas of counselling and social sciences, computer engineering, IT and design
- identification of new opportunities
- inclusion of appropriate higher education units into selected TAFE diplomas and advanced diplomas to assist transition and advancement of TAFE students
- development of nested suites at postgraduate level which include VTE development and teaching.

There is no desire from a policy perspective to extend inter-sectoral programs across the board into every higher education field. Rather, the emphasis at SUT, based on their experience, is to focus on areas of ‘discipline alignment’.

*The experience has been that articulation initiatives work best where there is ‘strong’ alignment between the sectors and more limited where alignment is ‘weak’.*

Continuation of the direct entry process for transferring SUT TAFE students will also be part of future arrangements.

Development process

The range of credit transfer agreements within SUT and with its other domestic partners is the outcome of a development process that flowed from the faculty-led or individual approach of the 1990s. Since 2001, a much stronger emphasis has been placed on developing a comprehensive and consistent model for developing and managing SUT credit transfer arrangements.

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All credit transfer agreements must now be formally approved in accordance with SUT’s policy entitled Credit Transfer Agreements – Approvals Policy and Scope, agreed in 2002.

This process of formal approval for all credit transfer arrangements has been designed to ensure that students who are interested in continuing their formal education gain as much benefit as possible out of studies already done whilst ensuring that academic rigour is appropriately maintained.\(^79\)

This policy provides that any agreement must be authorised by an appropriate person nominated by the Pro Vice-Chancellor, such as the Head of School/Head of Studies/School Director and, once approved, must be entered on the Credit Transfer Database (see later reference). This approach ensures that all new agreements are appropriate and in line with other related policies including SUT’s Credit Transfer Policy and the Accreditation and Re-Accreditation Policy. The former is based on the AVCC Principles with ‘credit to the highest levels commensurate with supporting the student’s chance of success’. It provides for credit of a minimum of at least one year’s university study but in practice, as discussed earlier, credit is usually granted for at least half a three-year degree program. The latter policy requires all submissions for new or re-accredited courses/programs or courses to provide details of credit transfer arrangements.

Development of inter-sectoral programs such as dual awards must be undertaken in accordance with SUT’s relevant policies. These include the policy entitled Development of Dual Awards and Higher Education Qualifications and the Accreditation and Re-accreditation Higher Education Policy. The Dual Awards Policy addresses principles, management and administration, admission, enrolment, fees, organisational and structural models for concurrent or sequential awards. SUT’s Accreditation Policy has a specific section addressing requirements for inter-sectoral awards, covering requirements relating to the concept proposal, development of accreditation, approval process and registration.

Development of inter-sectoral awards is overseen by the Inter-sectoral Advisory Committee (IAC) which receives concept proposals for endorsement and/or amendment and possible development funding as part of the accreditation process. The funding of projects involves project applications to the IAC by interested persons or groups within the University. The projects are assessed by the IAC and limited internal funding is provided to the successful groups to facilitate the advancement of these projects. The IAC has responsibility for managing the funded projects and monitoring progress of development and implementation.

Data on student transfer

Data provided for this case study show that there has been a dramatic shift in TAFE student transfer to higher education in the last four years, in part due to the increased emphasis on inter-sectoral advantage and, in part, a response to falling student enrolments from other cohorts. The proportion of TAFE-based admissions as a percentage of the total domestic undergraduate cohort was 27.46% in 2005 compared with 15.2% in 2002.

\(^79\) SUT policy document - Credit Transfer Agreements – Approvals Policy and Scope. See: [http://ppd.swinburne.edu.au/stuinf/CreditTransferAgreementsApprovals.htm](http://ppd.swinburne.edu.au/stuinf/CreditTransferAgreementsApprovals.htm)
There has also been a dramatic increase in ‘articulants’ from within SUT, with 14.7% of all new admissions in 2005 originating from SUT TAFE compared with 8.7% in 2001. The numbers of internal SUT TAFE students moving on to SUT higher education was 191 in 2002, 256 in 2003, 294 in 2004 and 328 in 2005. The number of applications was 80% higher in 2005 for 2006 studies than in 2004, demonstrating the impact of the widespread publicity campaign about the direct entry program.

Data have also been collected by SUT on progression rates of TAFE ‘articulants’ which reinforce the findings of similar data collection provided in some of the other case studies. These figures show that students selected on the basis of their TAFE qualifications do as well as their year 12 counterparts. Figures for the 2001 to 2003 period show that TAFE student progress rates were 86.7%, 84.9% and 85.6% respectively for these three years compared with 86.1%, 86.2% and 85.2% for school leavers.

Data provided for the purpose of this case study show that some 43% to 46% of VTE students received some credit for their TAFE studies towards their higher education degree at SUT. The main field where credit is granted is business/commerce.\(^{80}\)

Interviews with a very small number of ‘articulating’ SUT students carried out for this case study indicated strong support for studying in both sectors and the opportunities afforded in gaining an effective skills and a knowledge mix with appropriate credit.

**Leadership, governance and co-ordination**

One of the key enablers for credit transfer and articulation at SUT is the leadership provided by the Vice-Chancellor and other senior staff who drive the inter-sectoral focus and initiatives. While this has been a longstanding aspect of SUT’s direction since establishment, it is being re-shaped and re-promoted by the current senior management group as a core strength of the University.

As part of a possible future strategic focus, the leadership team is exploring the option of a ‘third way’ – the development of a new mission that stands alongside the separate missions of higher education and VTE.

Governance and co-ordination occur at a number of levels through different structures including the Joint Planning and Resources Committee of the University Council, the Academic Board (Higher Education), the Board of TAFE Studies and the Inter-sectoral Advisory Committee. As previously noted, all activities are governed by a comprehensive range of inter-linked policies and procedures of the University.

Co-ordination is primarily the responsibility of the Inter-sectoral Advisory Committee (IAC) which was established in 1999 to promote and develop innovative, inter-sectoral activities within the University. This group comprises 14 members, with senior staff from both divisions and the Lilydale campus. The Chair is a nominee of the Vice-Chancellor and the members include the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Higher Education) and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (TAFE Division) as well as academics from each sector. The body reports to the TAFE Board of Studies, the Academic Board and the Executive group and is charged with responsibility of

\(^{80}\) As above. These percentages are across the last three years 2003 to 2005.
maximising SUT’s inter-sectoral advantage. This work includes overseeing collaborative program initiatives, which have been predominantly project-based to date. It also includes management of the policy process, data and promotion activities. Developing a more strategic focus for the IAC is a key priority of the current membership.

**Monitoring and evaluation**

Evaluation is a key part of the IAC’s role, working with the two education divisions and statistical support services, and is better developed than in some of the other case studies. As part of the development of the University’s Annual Report, the IAC supplies information on key developments. Reports are also provided against the University Plan with the report against the 2005 Plan prepared in February 2006.

The IAC also seeks data to review student transfer rates and progress. As with the other case studies, evaluation and monitoring are not as well developed as the policy frameworks and development processes. The IAC will be reviewing this aspect of its role, in particular seeking more information on student perspectives on these initiatives.

**Information management, promotion and marketing**

Information and promotion of available credit transfer has been a longstanding aspect of SUT’s approach. For many years, this was documented in an annual publication called *Swinburne Pathways Credit Transfer Guide*. In 2005, one of the IAC’s key priorities was managing the development of a new interactive web tool that systematises and centralises all existing credit transfer agreements and makes these available on the web as a constantly updated source of information on SUT’s credit transfer arrangements. The website is called the *Credit Transfer Guide* and it provides information on the meaning of credit transfer, eligibility, how to apply and includes a browse tool that lists all current agreements by organisation, course of previous study or future higher education course at SUT.

The new website is user-friendly and contains some innovative features such as links which show, for example, how one VTE qualification at SUT may lead to a number of different SUT degrees with details of credit applicable to each. One issue is access to this very valuable source of information which is not obvious unless the web-user knows how to search the SUT website. It is not listed on the SUT home page or on the home page for future students and could not be found easily using the search tool. The main access is through the index.

SUT also has another relevant website called the pathways website that has been developed as a marketing initiative. This website is also not easy to access directly unless through the index. It caters for prospective and existing TAFE students, providing information about opportunities for continuing higher education study at SUT and, for SUT TAFE students, details about the direct entry scheme, as well as leading to the *Credit Transfer Guide*.

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Other promotion and marketing initiatives include the development of a glossy publication for schools and careers teachers, some information about credit transfer in SUT’s Student Guides and the letters sent to existing TAFE students about the direct entry process.

**Issues raised**

Throughout the course of consultations at SUT, various issues were raised which indicate that ‘seamlessness’ and ‘inter-sectoral pathways’ are not always at the ‘forefront of thinking by all staff and students’. The leadership group and IAC are committed, but they are also aware that, in some areas of SUT, there remains a reluctance to engage with this key aspect of the University’s role and structure.

Other external and internal impediments which impact on the capacity of the University to develop its ‘inter-sectoralness’ include:

- the impact of tensions between competing Commonwealth/state priorities
- DEST clustering categories that make management of student load harder, especially load requirements with articulating students moving into second year
- data management arrangements between the sectors – different reporting requirements and systems (a new management system introduced across both divisions of the University will provide additional tracking and reporting capacity)
- competency assessment and reporting cause difficulties, although Training Packages are not the issue from a TAFE perspective (SUT has developed a grading system in TAFE to address reporting arrangements and assist students gain admission in accordance with University policy)
- different assessment methods in TAFE that mean students transferring from this environment need transition assistance in meeting the University’s higher education assessment requirements
- block credit which can disadvantage students who move straight into second year as they miss out on orientation, and additional transition support is required
- the existence of different credit systems across the campuses.

### 7.3 Summary

The key features of this case study can be summarised as follows:

- The case study features a single institution with a dual sector structure.
- The dual sector structure is identified as a key ‘inter-sectoral advantage’, one of three strategic themes of the university.
- The university is committed to advancing ‘inter-sectoralness’ and providing its TAFE students with concrete expressions of that advantage through a direct entry scheme, a substantial range of credit transfer agreements and inter-sectoral programs where appropriate.
- The university’s executive is proactively leading the on-going development and enhancement of inter-sectoral initiatives.
• There has been a significant increase in numbers and percentages of ‘articulating’ students from TAFE generally and SUT TAFE in particular. The experience confirms the viability and appropriateness of increasing the pool of new higher education students from this source

• Structured credit transfer arrangements between the two divisions are longstanding but were not managed systematically until recent changes – they are now initiated or reviewed via the accreditation process and faculties take responsibility for gaining approvals and documenting information on a new centralised website.

• Current credit transfer agreements within the university cover a large number of awards and nearly all educational fields, and are in line with AVCC/AQF principles.

• Information and promotion of direct entry and credit transfer are available through well-designed web tools, although access could be made easier.

• A comprehensive and openly accessible policy framework is in place that governs credit transfer and articulation processes.

• Co-ordination is managed through a high-level cross-sector committee – all new inter-sectoral developments proceed through this group.

• The co-ordinating committee is resourced to carry out its responsibilities and monitors arrangements, with reporting responsibilities to the university’s leadership.

• Dual award developments with concurrent studies have not been overly successful and there is a move away from concurrent study approaches to sequential models.

• There is a commitment to developing new inter-sectoral programs in areas of natural synergies, as well as developing a more strategic focus.

• The university has made significant inroads in meeting its ‘inter-sectoral’ objects. This is seen as a continuing and iterative process that requires effective leadership and on-going commitment.
8 Blue Mountains Hotel Management School

8.1 Background

Focus

This case study examines the articulation model in place at the Blue Mountains Hotel School (BMHS) which was established in 1991 and is situated at Leura in the Blue Mountains, NSW. The articulation arrangement involves a partnership with the University of New England (UNE) and was finalised in October 2001. Prior to this agreement, BMHS had a similar arrangement with Bournemouth University in the UK.

The BMHS is a private education provider operating in the fields of hospitality and tourism. It has accreditation status as both a higher education provider and a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) in the VTE sector. It is also approved as a higher education provider under the Higher Education Support Act and therefore its eligible higher education students may apply for loans under FEE-HELP. At any one time, it has approximately 500 students – 70% are international, originating from a diverse range of countries, and 30% are domestic, though this mix may vary from year to year. BMHS has about 3,000 graduates.

UNE, situated in northern NSW at Armidale, is one of the oldest regional universities in Australia with some 18,500 students. It offers a diverse range of programs across four faculties: Arts; Economics, Business and Law; Education, Health and Professional Studies; and the Sciences. The partnership with the BMHS forms one of a small number it has with the VTE sector.

The case study is drawn primarily from the BMHS perspective, as the site in which consultations were conducted.

Objectives

For BMHS, the partnership with UNE flowed from a desire to develop a linkage with an Australian university and offer a complete education package with university status. The original arrangement with Bournemouth University had been created in 1999 through connections at the time. While this worked well, the tyranny of distance presented some problems and the award of a degree from another country did not have a strong pull in the market place. UNE seemed a good choice as a partner because BMHS considered that UNE would not dominate the partnership and UNE was interested in the model.\(^{83}\)

For UNE, the proposal by BMHS to offer a joint qualification in tourism and hospitality was seen as a cost effective way for the Faculty of Economics, Business and Law to broaden its portfolio of offerings and to include this growing area of education provision.\(^{84}\) The model (see below) provides UNE with a small pipeline.

\(^{83}\) Comments made by BMHS Principal in consultations.

\(^{84}\) Based on internal documentation between the parties setting out the ’Proposed partnership’, provided to the consultant.
of students, although these do not attend the Armidale campus. UNE is paid fees by BMHS to cover the role played by the University in monitoring the arrangement and to cover a licence fee for the course materials and use of the UNE logo in marketing materials. In determining whether the partnership posed a risk, UNE recognised that BMHS had a strong reputation in the industry and was recognised for the standard of education it offered. From this perspective, the partnership arrangement was seen to be ‘on solid foundations’.

Drivers

The immediate scope of this case study is very narrow. It concerns two organisations, one suite of articulated qualifications in one field of education and one location for delivery. That said, it is these factors which make this both an unusual and an important case study. Unlike some of the other case studies, no external drivers, such as government policy or regional needs, appear evident in the establishment of this current articulation model. Rather, the model has been driven by the educational philosophy of BMHS, combined with a practical need to offer a ‘university’ outcome.

The School’s operating environment provides a unique context which offers a live-in learning experience that is both fully residential and a simulated work environment, extended by external work placement. The students are resident (as in a college) but they are also the guests and the workers of the simulated hotel/restaurant environment in which they live and are educated. The location of Leura is sufficiently isolated to ensure the students are totally enmeshed within this learning environment, while also offering immediate opportunities for work in the industry as well as proximity to Sydney and beyond.

The international context is equally important, with the majority of students being full-fee paying international students. BMHS markets itself heavily in a range of countries through overseas agents. It has recently become part of a global alliance called ‘Orion’, which comprises world-recognised hotel management schools operating in five countries, and is the only Australian private provider to gain accreditation by the World Tourism Organisation (WTO), a United Nations agency specialising in tourism education and policy.

8.2  Key features of the case study

Terminology

The model in place since the beginning of 2002 is a cross-sector articulation arrangement of nested awards. This is still currently operating but will be phased out progressively from July 2006, to be replaced with a new higher education suite of nested qualifications. Before turning to the new development, it is worth capturing the current model in further detail as a means of informing the outcomes of this project.

Model

The current model is a three-year program undertaken over six semesters and delivered entirely by BMHS. Semesters 2 and 4 require compulsory off-campus work placement in the industry of at least 800 hours (21 weeks) each, which is organised by the BMHS or by the student. Semesters 1 to 4 are VTE in focus, based
on the Tourism and Hospitality Training Packages, while Semesters 5 and 6 are a mix of UNE curriculum and higher education subjects developed by BMHS. Students enrol with BMHS for the first and second years and then jointly in both organisations for the third year.

Under this articulation model, students who successfully complete the requirements are able to exit at the end of the:

- first year, with a Certificate III in Hospitality (Operations) or Certificate III in Tourism (Theme Parks and Attractions), depending on the strand selected – issued by BMHS
- second year, with a Diploma of Hospitality (Management) or Diploma of Tourism (Operations Management), depending on the strand selected – issued by BMHS
- fifth semester, with an Advanced Diploma of Hospitality Management or Advanced Diploma of Tourism (Management) – issued by BMHS – and the Diploma in Hotel/Tourism Management – issued by International Hotel Tourism Training Institute (IHTTI) in Switzerland
- sixth semester, with the Bachelor of Commerce (Hospitality and Tourism Management) – issued by UNE.

Students who already hold a relevant Australian certificate III or diploma could enter into the second and third years, respectively, with their previous qualifications recognised in the nested arrangement. While the capacity for multiple entry points exists, the experience of BMHS has been that, because of the extra material they include in the learning, delivery and assessment strategies developed to implement the Training Package qualifications, these ‘external’ students have not obtained the same overall learning outcomes that BMHS students gain from their BMHS experience. Students then entering the following year can be disadvantaged by the credit they receive. For this reason, BMHS has implemented a strategy of giving fee discounts rather than credit for prior studies.

**Development of the articulation model**

The planning with UNE took place over a year between 2000 and 2001, with the two organisations working closely together during this period. At UNE, the discussions and negotiations were undertaken by the Faculty of Economics, Business and Law. Two other models were also agreed at the time. However, these appear to have been little utilised in practice.85

Within the nested structure, the Hospitality and Tourism Training Package requirements for the certificate III and diploma qualifications have been fully met alongside some certificate IV units of competency. BMHS devised a program structure that clustered the Training Package units of competency into broader subject units that more closely approximated the names and content of units delivered by UNE and which more closely supported the BMHS philosophy.

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85 One of the other models is an extension of the first and involves a fourth year at UNE that provides the student with a double degree (Bachelor of Commerce/Bachelor of Hospitality and Tourism Management). The third model led to the same degree as the first but involved two years study at UNE and a third year at BMHS.
In the higher education components of the program (Semesters 5 and 6), four UNE subjects are delivered by BMHS alongside the higher education units devised by BMHS and currently accredited through UNE. As all delivery takes place at BMHS, UNE is more a virtual presence, mainly through library access and quality assurance. In these final semesters, the students are enrolled as full-time UNE students. In finalising the program design, UNE was required to make changes to its Bachelor of Commerce regulations to ‘reflect the unique nature of the program at BMHS’.86

Unlike most articulation arrangements which involve student transfer to a very different learning environment, the delivery of the whole curriculum by BMHS has provided teaching/learning continuity for the students and enabled BMHS to complete the process of education with its own philosophy. In practice, this has meant that the theoretical third year was grounded in the operational experience gained in the first two years, which was itself layered by management thinking (the value-added BMHS components to the Training Package).

Discussions with a small number of domestic students verified the reality of the BMHS model and strong support for the articulation structure. The articulation model, with its capacity for multiple qualifications, was highly valued as was the overall preparation for industry employment at the conclusion of the third year. The students strongly supported the need for this type of cross-sectoral model for all tourism/hospitality management courses.

You get much better understanding of the theory through your practical experience. Even the brightest students need practical skills to operate in this industry.

Leadership, governance and co-ordination

Because this is such a different model from most articulation arrangements, in that BMHS delivers the whole program, its management has also been a little different. The partnership with UNE was formalised through a written five-year agreement or formal legal contract. It specifies the outcomes for UNE and the responsibilities of BMHS.

The main services provided by UNE include overall supervision of the delivery, including administrative procedures, moderation of assessments and issuing of the final award. Moderation is a critical component and all final year assessments are sent to UNE. As a further quality assurance measure, BMHS also undertakes additional external moderation. Regular site visits to BMHS are conducted by UNE and faculty staff communicate on a regular basis.

A key in establishing the original agreement was the personal relationship between the Principal of BMHS and Vice Chancellor of UNE at the time. Although both positions now have new incumbents, this relationship has been maintained. Both parties have provided official positions for the other in their institutions – the Vice-Chancellor of UNE is a member of the BMHS Advisory Board and the Principal of BMHS is an Adjunct Professor in the UNE Business School.

86 Internal Proposed Partnerships document prepared by UNE, p. 2.
Evaluation and monitoring

Since the agreement was signed, there has been no major evaluation. As identified above, on-going monitoring occurs to ensure assessment meets the standard of the University and, from time to time, site visits and communications by UNE faculty staff are carried out on a regular basis. In addition, as with other projects of this kind, on-going monitoring by UNE now occurs through an annual project review procedure.

A process of re-negotiating the agreement commenced in late 2004 through correspondence initiated by the Principal of BMHS. A range of issues has been raised by both parties and discussions are proceeding on the future of the agreement in light of the changes to the program by BMHS and other higher education programs under development. At this stage, the future role of UNE is uncertain. UNE is particularly keen to enhance its role in any future relationship to include more thorough engagement in teaching and research in this academic area.

Information management, promotion and marketing

Both parties have joint responsibility to promote and market the program and provide information to prospective students, though in practice all of this is carried out by BMHS. All promotional materials must be authorised by UNE before distribution. BMHS employs strategies such as widespread distribution of printed brochures and a prospectus to students and their families, web information, use of overseas agents who explain the program to prospective students and promotion at career expos. The detail of the articulated qualification model is set out in the prospectus using the symbolism of a railroad track with various stops or, in the latest version, a plane journey which is ‘your journey to success’. The relationship with UNE is also made clear in this marketing material. The BMHS website does not offer this same detailed information but is in the process of being overhauled. As all students are provided with the print-based prospectus, the relationship with UNE is well understood.

Future arrangements

While the BMHS/UNE articulation model has worked well, BMHS has decided to move away from using VTE programs in the first two years of the program. The certificate IIIs/diplomas from the Tourism/Hospitality Training Packages will be replaced by a higher education accredited Diploma of Food and Beverage Management as the first-year outcome. The second year will become an Associate Degree in Hotel and Resort Management. At this point in time, the third year remains the same and the final award is the UNE conferred Bachelor of Commerce (Hospitality and Tourism Management). The revised curriculum and two new awards have been accredited by the NSW Higher Education Directorate.

The decision to move out of VTE studies is not a shift in the fundamental philosophy of BMHS and the first two years will be still strongly centred on building operational and management vocational skills, knowledge and values. Rather, the decision was made by the Board and staff of the School in order to
enhance its position in both the international and domestic market as well as to develop ‘a more flexible and industry relevant course’.\textsuperscript{87}

The development of the Orion group as an international partnership is one of the key strategic directions for BMHS, involving a range of fully or partly owned sister schools and alliances of other leading hotel schools. This broadening of the international focus is one of the reasons for moving away from the cross-sector articulation model. BMHS is placing itself as a leading edge education institution to meet projected growth in the hospitality and tourism industry, and the move to higher education is part of meeting this demand. ‘The international community want this. It’s easier for them to get a visa as many countries require a bachelor degree.’\textsuperscript{88} Although the old model achieved a bachelor degree outcome, the split between VTE and higher education is seen by BMHS as harder to sell.

Working within the VTE framework was also cited as another factor. Whilst the use of externally developed Training Packages has been workable in the articulated program, through the specific ‘value-added’ clustering design by BMHS, the fact that the content is outside the direct control of BMHS is an issue. In a number of areas such as Food and Beverage and Front Office, the content has not been seen as a problem but in the Tourism Training Package it is described as ‘not readily applicable to what BMHS delivers and what industry says is needed’.

BMHS saw the need for a more proactive and flexible approach:

\begin{quote}
The move to becoming an HEI is essential for the continuing strategic development of the School…. The opportunity to develop new and innovative HE courses outside the VET framework can lead to competitive advantage and a greater degree of specialism than previously possible.\textsuperscript{89}
\end{quote}

The inclusion of higher education accredited associate degrees in the AQF was another factor impacting on the change. The establishment of this new qualification enabled BMHS to make the switch to higher education and to continue with a nested set of programs with discrete exit points. Operating in the higher education sector will also enable domestic students to access FEE-HELP that should assist in marketing the course to domestic students.

BMHS has requested that UNE supply some form of endorsement of BMHS’s new undergraduate program. It has also requested that UNE provide postgraduate award pathways to be delivered at BMHS locations in NSW and Canberra. These proposals form part of current negotiations for a renewal of the contract in 2006.

8.3 \textit{Summary}

The key features of this case study can be summarised as follows.

- The partnership has developed between a university and a private higher education institution accredited for both the VTE and higher education delivery.

\textsuperscript{87} Comments by BMHS Principal, Guy Bentley, in consultation discussions – site visit 28 March 2006.

\textsuperscript{88} Interview with Helen Batey, Academic Dean of BMHS, 27 March 2006.

\textsuperscript{89} BMHS, \textit{Business Plan}, p. 24.
The partnership was established on the basis of existing relationships between people in both institutions.

Business decisions formed the original driver for the partnership, although the university partner now wants more solid academic foundations to underpin any future relationship.

Initial development was a single, jointly-badged award that combines higher education and VTE outcomes. Now it is moving towards a higher education award only delivered by the VTE partner, but possibly with some university involvement.

Development of the articulated award required design input and collaboration from both parties.

Multiple entry and exit points exist for students, with guaranteed pathways for all students who successfully complete each level.

The articulation model is delivered at one institution so transition issues for students are minimal.

International recognition is built into the pathway.

Higher education curriculum requirements are able to accommodate a strong emphasis on practical experience and work placements.

The recent move to a higher education award rather than dual VTE and higher education awards is driven by market forces and practical issues.
9 Nursing Pathways

9.1 Background

In recognition of the critical health workforce shortages currently being experienced in Australia, the Working Party on Credit Transfer and Articulation determined that it would be helpful to include a case study in Stage 2 of the National Study that focused specifically on a health profession, in particular nursing.

The Foreword to the recent Productivity Commission report, *Australia’s Health Workforce*, notes:

> Australia’s health care system depends heavily on the commitment and skills of a health workforce of nearly half a million people and a large group of volunteers.

> Many of the arrangements under which the workforce operates are under considerable pressure, as are health workers themselves. The headline indicator of this is a workforce shortage across many professions, particularly in outer metropolitan, rural and remote areas. And these pressures are expected to intensify. In response, Governments and other stakeholders have been initiating a range of changes, but further reform is needed.\(^90\)

The report highlights a number of issues in relation to health workforce education and training, including:

- Inadequate pathways between VTE and higher education – VTE qualifications in enrolled nursing, for example, are not given adequate recognition by universities when enrolled nurses seek to progress their careers by entering an undergraduate registered nurse program.

- Difficulties in accessing quality clinical placements for students in both VTE and university courses. Institutions are perceived to be ‘at the mercy of the health system who [sic] have no mandate or inducement to offer the placements’ (p. 81).

- The tensions between the role of universities in providing a broad general education and the needs of the health workforce for highly skilled employment-ready graduates.

- Jurisdictional differences in course type, duration and quality which impede national consistency and impact on the mobility of graduates across jurisdictions.

Effective credit transfer and articulation arrangements between VTE and higher education can play a significant role in overcoming some of the identified weaknesses in the current education and training system.

Representatives of the National Nursing and Nursing Education Taskforce (Victoria) advise that there are a range of typologies for credit transfer and articulation from VTE enrolled nurse programs to higher education registered nurse degree programs. The reasons for the variety are reported to include:


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Various States have different RTO training levels for registration and entry to practice as an enrolled nurse – some are at certificate IV level and some are at diploma level.

To date, there has been no Health National Training Package including a qualification with standardised outcomes for enrolled nurse competencies. The Community Services and Health Industry Skills Council is currently reviewing the Health Training Package which includes new enrolled nursing competency standards and qualifications at the certificate IV, diploma and advanced diploma levels. It is expected that the Training Package will be endorsed by the National Quality Council the end of November 2006.

Existing enrolled nurse competencies are not a sub-set of the registered nurse competencies.

The demand for customised and fast-track credit transfer and articulation arrangements are intended to provide a ‘quick fix’ solution to nurse shortages, rather than a sustainable model for longer-term application.

Given the diversity in nursing pathways, it was determined that the case study should examine a number of different types of credit transfer and articulation arrangements. Three universities were subsequently identified for inclusion in the case study:

- University of Wollongong
- James Cook University
- The University of Melbourne.

The arrangements in place at each institution are described below, followed by a summary of the themes emerging across the three institutions.

### 9.2 University of Wollongong/TAFE NSW - Illawarra Institute (Shellharbour Campus)

**Terminology**

The University of Wollongong has adopted the terminology of ‘advanced standing’ when referring to the granting of credit for previous VTE study. The University of Wollongong Student Enrolment Guide notes:

> Advanced standing may be granted either as specified credit (exemptions from specific subjects) or unspecified credit (in the form of credit points granted towards your degree).

**Description of credit transfer and articulation arrangements**

The University offers a credit transfer arrangement and an articulation arrangement for students wishing to undertake the Bachelor of Nursing degree.

- Enrolled nurses with a TAFE Advanced Certificate or Certificate IV Enrolled Nurse receive 12 credit points’ advanced standing toward Year 1 of the Bachelor of Nursing program, representing 25% of the required credit points for Year 1 and a little over 8% of the total program. This represents a structured credit transfer arrangement applicable to all New South Wales
candidates meeting the entry requirements. Approximately 2-3 students access this arrangement each year.

- The School of Nursing, Midwifery & Indigenous Health at the University of Wollongong and the Shellharbour Campus of TAFE NSW Illawarra Institute have worked collaboratively to develop a Bridging Course for enrolled nurses to gain entry into Year 2 of the University’s Bachelor of Nursing degree. The bridging program is available in both Wollongong and Bega. The Bega Education Centre is a joint University of Wollongong, TAFE Illawarra Institute and Bega High School facility.

In addition, the University offers a Bachelor of Nursing (Conversion) program which provides hospital-trained nurses or diplomates with the opportunity to upgrade to degree level. Candidates must be registered nurses.

The focus of this case study is on the Bridging Course.

**Development process**

The aim of the Bridging Course is to develop the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes to facilitate certificate IV enrolled nurses to enter Year 2 of the Bachelor of Nursing. Specifically, the course aims to:

- explore problem/critical thinking in relation to nursing practice
- explore intra and inter-relationships in the health care arena
- develop previous knowledge in psychology in relation to nursing
- develop previous knowledge in science that underpins nursing practice.

It also seeks to familiarise TAFE-prepared students with the educational practices and surroundings of the university sector. The course is based on the Australian Nursing Council Inc (ANCI) competencies. The Bridging Course updates the levels of knowledge, skills and behaviours of the enrolled nurse to the competencies of a student who has completed one year of the Bachelor of Nursing at the University of Wollongong. The students entering the Bridging Course have met the Legislative enrolled nurses ANCI Competencies.

Mapping occurred against the University of Wollongong Bachelor of Nursing curriculum and the New South Wales Technical and Further Education Commission (NSW TAFE) curriculum for enrolled nurses. As a result of the mapping exercise, three subjects were developed to cover the gaps in knowledge, skills and behaviours between an enrolled nurse with a Certificate IV in Nursing (Enrolled Nurse) and an undergraduate student who has completed Year 1 in the Bachelor of Nursing program at the University of Wollongong. One of the subjects is taught by the University of Wollongong, with the other two subjects taught by Shellharbour TAFE. The University currently waives tuition fees for the subject it teaches. The level of credit in the Bridging Course provides 300% leverage over the level of credit granted for the enrolled Nursing Certificate IV graduates who articulate to the University Bachelor of Nursing program without the Bridging Course.

**Drivers and benefits of the arrangements**

The Head Teacher in Nursing at the Shellharbour Campus was the key initiator of discussions with the University about possible articulation arrangements. She was
motivated by the desire to see the prior learning and clinical practice experience of enrolled nurses given greater recognition in degree studies, as well as to expand career opportunities for enrolled nurses.

The participating institutions identify a number of benefits from the nursing Bridging Course, including:

- Providing a study and career pathway for enrolled nurses, and increasing the number of registered nurses available to health services. In particular, it is noted that a large percentage of enrolled nurses work in the aged care sector and it is anticipated that many will proceed through the degree program with the intention of continuing to work in aged care.

- Broadening the pool of potential quality entrants to the Bachelor of Nursing program. Pathway students often make very good students due to their maturity, experience and commitment to a nursing career.

- Enhancing diversity in the student body, adding to the quality of the learning experience for all students. Approximately 50% of the Bachelor of Nursing commencing cohort comprises school leavers, with the other 50% comprising other categories of students including enrolled nurses.

- Reducing the load on the health services in terms of first year clinical placements. The arrangements acknowledge the substantial clinical practice within the enrolled nurse program, with pathway students entering direct to Year 2 of the program. This frees up clinical placements for students across other years.

- Broadening the perspectives of both University and TAFE staff through the exchange of ideas and exposure to different models and experiences.

More broadly, the partners report that the level of trust and mutual understanding established between them in developing the bridging program for delivery in Shellharbour/Wollongong and Bega has had a range of important spin-off benefits. For example, it enabled them to extend readily the arrangement for delivery in Bega, thus providing a consolidated nurse education presence in a region previously not well serviced by any education providers. This in turn has increased demand for enrolled nurse training in the area, as students know they have the option of continuing on to a degree without needing to relocate. In addition, the arrangement has enhanced TAFE NSW links with the Greater Southern Area Health Service and in particular Bega Hospital, an important consideration given the large number of hours of clinical experience required in the enrolled nurse program.

Data on student transfer

Enrolments in the Bega bridging program have averaged 15-18 per year, which has then flowed on to Bachelor of Nursing enrolments there.

The number of students enrolling in the Shellharbour/Wollongong bridging program, and the number subsequently entering the Bachelor of Nursing program, for each year since the inception of the program, is as follows:
In 2006, there are 61 students on a waiting list for entry to the bridging program. The number granted entry will depend on the number of pathway students the University has the capacity to accept. This is currently under discussion.

The reasons for the significant increase in demand for the program are not entirely clear. It is speculated, however, that a number of factors may be playing a part:

- The extent of community awareness of the shortage of registered nurses and the strong job prospects available.
- The broadening of the Scope of Practice for enrolled nurses, and the consequential deepening of the curriculum in some areas, has given enrolled nurses greater confidence in their academic abilities and capacity for higher level study.
- Greater awareness of pathway options. Students unable to gain direct entry to university, or lacking the confidence to tackle university studies as mature aged students, know they have a pathway to follow if they can achieve success at the TAFE NSW level. With a significant majority of university students needing to work to support themselves, the pathway option also provides an opportunity for students to gain certification as an enrolled nurse and to work part-time in the nursing profession while completing their degree.

Governance and accreditation

The bridging program arrangements are documented in a Memorandum of Understanding between the University of Wollongong and TAFE NSW Illawarra. In both institutions, the bridging program was approved through the standard course accreditation and approval processes.

The two institutions also worked closely together to attain accreditation for the bridging program through the (now) NSW Nurses and Midwives Board. This was necessary to guarantee that pathway students graduating from the Bachelor of Nursing would be eligible for registration.

With these formal frameworks in place, the day-to-day relationship between the two institutions tends to operate on a relatively informal basis. There are no formal committees, for example, that oversee the pathway arrangements.

Evaluation and monitoring

There are currently no formal mechanisms in place for tracking the performance and progress of pathway students, though the University will occasionally undertake analyses of student outcomes by entry mode and entry standards.
The general perception of teaching staff, however, is that pathway students perform as well as other students, though some students may initially lack confidence in their academic abilities.

The University and TAFE NSW Illawarra Institute both acknowledge there would be benefits in adopting a more rigorous approach to tracking the characteristics and outcomes of pathway students.

**Promotion and marketing**

The partners rely on a number of approaches for promoting and marketing the bridging program, including:

- TAFE NSW Illawarra Institute and University of Wollongong Handbooks and websites
- information on career pathways to students studying in the TAFE NSW enrolled nurse program
- on-going communication with the Area Health Services and nurse employers
- media interviews
- word of mouth.

**Barriers and issues**

The partners report no significant barriers to the establishment of credit transfer and articulation arrangements. They emphasise that the level of trust between the two institutions is central to the success of the arrangements.

The only significant issue that they currently face is the challenge of meeting student demand. In 2006, there are roughly two students on the waiting list for each place available in the bridging program. If the University were to allow more students into Year 2, it would need to decrease its first year intake accordingly and this leads to perturbations in student pipelines that become problematic to manage. Discussions are on-going to attempt to deal with this issue, as the University does not wish to turn away potential, quality students.

**Future developments**

Both institutions are committed to the continuation of the bridging program, though there is recognition that demand for the program could decline from students living in the Bega and surrounding areas, as the ‘backlog’ of enrolled nurses wishing to upgrade to degree qualifications reduces. However, there appears to be an increasing demand for the course from students who have completed the enrolled nurse program in Canberra.

There is interest in exploring the possibility of extending existing articulation arrangements for Aboriginal Health Workers to incorporate a combined Indigenous Health and Nursing degree. There is also interest in exploring bridging programs for aged care health workers with Certificate III Aged Care Work qualifications.
Experience of pathway students

We had an opportunity to speak with one pathway student who completed the three-year Bachelor of Nursing program. While this clearly does not constitute a representative sample, the experience and views of the student are an interesting confirmation of some of the themes emerging overall from the nursing pathways case study. The student concerned received the equivalent of one semester’s credit for the three-year degree program. Since completing the degree, she has successfully completed higher-level studies.

The student reported that the support provided by her employer (where she was employed as an enrolled nurse) and the University had been key factors in her success in the degree program. Her employer ensured that her work shifts were compatible with her study commitments, and the University provided additional tutorial and learning support to assist her in making the transition from VTE to higher education. In her view, some pathway students who experienced difficulties with their academic studies did not take advantage of the additional support available. The lighter study load in the first year of the program, due to the credit granted, was also a great help in making the transition.

The student indicated that the major challenge for pathway students was making the necessary ‘mindshift’ in terms of the expanded scope of practice and higher order responsibilities of registered nurses compared with enrolled nurses. This can take some time, and she wondered if direct entry to the intensive second year of the program would create some difficulties for students who were unable to make that mindshift very quickly.

The student reflected that the aged care sector does not offer attractive career, salary or professional development prospects for registered nurses, and hence enrolled nurses who upgrade are unlikely to be motivated to return to the sector on graduation.

9.3 James Cook University/Tropical North Queensland TAFE Cairns Campus

Terminology

James Cook University uses the term ‘credit transfer’ when describing its pathway arrangements in nursing.

Description of credit transfer and articulation arrangements

The University offers three credit transfer arrangements for students entering its Bachelor of Nursing Science:

- Students with hospital-based training as enrolled nurses may apply for credit for two specified subjects, equivalent to half a semester of study in the three-year degree program.
- Students with TAFE Certificates III and IV in Indigenous Primary Health Care may also apply for credit for two specified subjects.
- Students with a Queensland Diploma of Nursing (Pre-enrolment) or equivalent are granted credit for four specified subjects, equivalent to the first semester of study in the three-year degree program, and are also
granted a clinical placement exemption in Semester 2 of the first year of the program.

In addition, the University and Tropical North Queensland TAFE Cairns campus have worked closely to plan a new articulation arrangement. Commencing in 2007, students who have completed the Diploma of Nursing (Pre-enrolment) at the Cairns campus of Tropical North Queensland TAFE will be granted credit for the first year of the degree program and will enter directly into Year 2 of the program.

In 2006, the University also introduced a pathway for science and allied health graduates, whereby graduates enter directly to Year 2 of the nursing undergraduate program.

**Development process**

The credit transfer arrangements in place with regard to the Queensland Diploma of Nursing (Pre-enrolment) were based on a mapping of the diploma course curriculum against the degree program.

With regard to the articulation arrangements between the University and Cairns TAFE, senior staff from the respective Nursing schools of the two institutions worked closely together to map the similarities and differences between the degree program and the diploma program. This process identified a number of modifications to the diploma program that would be required before students would be adequately prepared to enter Year 2 of the degree program. These modifications included:

- increased coverage of some topics such as paediatrics, primary health care and patho-physiology
- increased depth in biology, chemistry and physics.

With respect to the latter, it is planned to provide pathway students with an intensive science block program of a week’s duration prior to entering the degree program. This will be delivered at Cairns TAFE and taught by academics from the University, with a view to assisting students in making the transition from the TAFE environment to the higher education environment. The first cohort of graduates from the modified diploma program will complete their courses in June 2006.

Queensland TAFE programs are subject to review every five years, and a revised Diploma of Nursing Care will be introduced in 2007. This will require a review of the articulation arrangement.

**Drivers and benefits of the arrangements**

With respect to the credit transfer arrangements in place for the Queensland Diploma of Nursing (Pre-enrolment), the main nominated drivers for initially establishing the arrangements are:

- pressure from prospective students for recognition of prior studies and experience, and associated lower tuition costs
- the Commonwealth Government’s and University’s policy emphasis on learning pathways
- the shortage of nurses in the workforce.
In the case of the specific arrangement with Cairns TAFE, the Director of the Tropical North Queensland Institute and the Executive Dean of the Faculty of Medicine, Health and Molecular Sciences identified the opportunity for enhanced articulation arrangements and were key drivers of the initiative. Their combined commitment was a significant factor in overcoming initial concerns that the science focus of the degree program would make it difficult to achieve the necessary equivalence between the two programs. The willingness of TAFE staff to modify the curriculum to ensure equivalence with the first year of the degree program was also a key factor in enabling the arrangement to be introduced.

The key anticipated benefits identified in relation to the Cairns articulation arrangement include:

- recognition of prior studies and reduced tuition fees for students
- career progression for enrolled nurses
- diversification of the student body in the degree program enhances the learning experience for both younger students and the more mature and experienced pathway students
- greater capacity for the two institutions to work together with stakeholders and the community in advocating on nurse education and training matters.

In addition, the partner institutions report that the articulation arrangement they have established is attractive to the international student market and they intend to explore joint marketing opportunities, for both domestic and international markets. The two institutions are also working closely together with the aim of bidding for an AusAID contract for the delivery of a joint diploma/degree nursing program.

While senior University nursing academics acknowledge that the credit transfer and articulation arrangements deliver real benefits to individual students in terms of recognition of prior learning and career advancement, they are less convinced that the current push by governments to encourage enrolled nurses to upgrade their qualifications is necessarily a successful response to the current nursing workforce shortages. This is discussed further below.

Data on student transfer

The first Cairns pathway entrants to the degree program will commence in 2007. The University is hoping to receive applications from about 10-12 students.

With respect to the credit transfer arrangements, the University does not formally track the number of students gaining entry on the basis of VTE qualifications. However, based on a review of enrolment figures and data on exemptions from subjects over the previous five years, the University estimates that an average of 8% of its commencing students gain credit on the basis of prior VTE qualifications or hospital-based enrolled nurse training.

Governance and accreditation

Within the University, pathway arrangements are subject to approval by the Undergraduate Studies Committee and the School Management Committee, prior to being approved by the University Academic Board.
With respect to the specific arrangement between the University and Cairns TAFE, a Memorandum of Understanding is currently being prepared and is expected to be signed in the near future. The MoU will include an attachment documenting how the competencies delivered through the diploma program map to the first year of the degree program.

There are no plans at this stage to establish formal joint governance or committee mechanisms to oversee the articulation arrangements. Efforts are being made, however, to continue to build strong working and professional relationships between staff of the University and staff of the Institute to support the long-term sustainability of the articulation arrangements.

The credit transfer and articulation arrangements are not subject to approval by the Queensland Nursing Council, as the Council leaves it to universities to determine their own credit policies.

Evaluation and monitoring
The University does not have any formal systems in place for tracking the performance relative to other students of those entering on the basis of VTE qualifications. It is hoped that the University’s new student information system to be implemented in the foreseeable future will enable enhanced tracking and reporting capabilities.

Anecdotal evidence, however, suggests that overall pathway students perform as well as other students. The maturity and experience of enrolled nurses tend to balance any difficulties they may have in adjusting to academic requirements.

Promotion and marketing
The credit transfer arrangements are promoted and marketed via a number of approaches:

- University website
- School of Nursing Sciences course flyers and undergraduate student handbook
- TAFE Queensland *Pathways to University: Getting Credit for your TAFE Study* publication.

Tropical North Queensland TAFE has actively marketed the Cairns articulation arrangement as part of its marketing of the diploma program. The University will more actively promote the arrangement once the MOU is formally adopted.

Barriers and issues

**Barriers**

It is reported that there were no significant barriers to introducing the existing ‘generic’ credit transfer arrangements which grant diploma graduates credit for the equivalent of one semester of the degree program. Some Queensland universities offer diplomates credit for a year’s study. However, James Cook University argues that, in its assessment, the TAFE Queensland diploma course is not equivalent to its first year program, which has a strong science base. External stakeholders serving
on University Committees have supported this view. In addition, the University notes that the Queensland Nursing Council and other nursing regulatory authorities recognise clear differences between the scope of practice of enrolled nurses and registered nurses. The University, however, experiences continued pressure from prospective students to increase the amount of credit granted.

There were also no significant barriers identified for the Cairns articulation arrangement. However, as noted earlier, there had historically been some resistance from University academic staff to the notion that diplomates would enter directly into Year 2 of the degree program.

Issues

There are a number of issues identified in relation to the credit transfer and articulation arrangements. As noted earlier, some University academic staff are not convinced that the current push by governments to encourage enrolled nurses to upgrade their qualifications necessarily represents an effective strategy for responding to current nursing workforce shortages. They put forward the following reasons for this view:

- Upgrading enrolled nurses to registered nurses effectively ‘shifts the deckchairs’ in terms of the number of nurses in the workforce, rather than actually increasing the number of nurses.
- The dual qualification arrangement extends the period of time to qualify as a registered nurse from three years to at least four years.
- There are critical nurse shortages and a predominance of enrolled nurses in the aged care sector. Upgrading enrolled nurses to registered nurses consequently risks a loss of nursing staff in areas of shortage such as aged care.
- Registered nurses are highly marketable overseas, whereas enrolled nurses are not as marketable. In the UK, for example, there is no classification equivalent to the enrolled nurse.

The University recently received a credit application from a student who had completed a certificate IV nursing program in Victoria. The certificate IV is a requirement for registration as a Division 2 Nurse in Victoria, the equivalent of an enrolled nurse in other states. The University was unable to grant credit, however, after TAFE Queensland indicated that it did not recognise the Victorian certificate IV as equivalent to its diploma program. This situation highlights the limitations on nurse mobility and credit transfer presented by the significant differences across jurisdictions in nurse education, training and registration.

Queensland TAFE has recently instructed TAFE institutes to aim to double their nursing intakes. This could have a significant impact on the number of diplomates seeking articulation in future years, and may create challenges for universities, including James Cook University, in managing the consequential demand for advanced entry.

91 This is a separate issue from eligibility for attaining an enrolled nurse license through the Queensland Nursing Council.
Future developments

The University anticipates that once students start proceeding through the Cairns articulation arrangement, there may be an increased interest from other TAFE institutes to introduce similar arrangements.

In addition, it is anticipated that the trust and collegial working relationships established between the University and Tropical North Queensland TAFE will have continuing benefits in terms of opening up opportunities for joint arrangements in other health areas. Investigations are also currently underway to determine how pathways for health care workers may be enhanced.

9.4 The University of Melbourne

Terminology

The University of Melbourne adopts the terminology of an ‘accelerated degree’, whereby candidates satisfying the entry requirements may enrol in a two-year versus a three-year degree.

Description of credit transfer and articulation arrangements

The two-year accelerated Bachelor of Nursing degree was introduced in 2002, and was offered at both the Parkville and Shepparton campuses up to 2005. From 2006, it is only offered at the Parkville campus.

To be eligible for entry to the accelerated degree, applicants must meet at least one of the following criteria:

- graduates with an approved degree or diploma of at least three years’ duration in any disciplinary field
- individuals who have satisfactorily completed requirements for a TAFE Certificate IV (Nursing) qualification, or equivalent, and who have practised as a Registered Nurse Division 2 for the equivalent of at least 12 months full-time within the last three years
- individuals who have satisfactorily completed requirements for a TAFE or Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation Certificate IV or Diploma equivalent and who have practised as an Aboriginal Health Worker for at least two years full-time.

Applicants in the second and third categories are also required to undertake a written bioscience test and may be required to undertake written tests in literacy and comprehension.

The accelerated degree is designed to cater for the diversity of students entering the program. It consequently assumes no prior knowledge, but accelerates through the curriculum very quickly on the basis that all students bring prior knowledge and experience of different varieties that assists them to keep pace.

Students entering on the basis of TAFE nursing qualifications are provided with a bioscience package of materials to assist them in preparing for the bioscience test. Following the administration of the test, students are given feedback and assistance with working on areas of identified weakness. For students entering without a
science background, they are provided with a bioscience package of materials to assist them in preparing for the bioscience subjects.

The orientation program covers academic writing, study techniques, and advice on using the library and electronic databases. All students are encouraged to revise their knowledge of anatomy and science prior to the commencement of classes. For students entering without a nursing background, a one-week introductory block covering basic nursing areas is provided.

**Development process**

In the past, the University of Melbourne offered nursing programs at the graduate and research levels only. For a number of reasons, however, it was decided to extend program offerings to the undergraduate level. These reasons included:

- the perceived benefits associated with ‘growing their own’ graduate and research students
- a desire to consolidate existing relationships with metropolitan hospitals by offering undergraduate programs that produced graduates for their workforces
- offering Division 2 nurses the opportunity to upgrade to Division 1
- demand from science graduates who were looking to enter the health sciences or to make a career change, sometimes due to weak employment and career prospects in their selected field.

The University determined that it would aim to cater to different target audiences than those catered for by most other universities offering three-year degrees. In particular, they decided to offer a two-year accelerated degree that would cater to mature students with an existing knowledge and skill base attained either through prior degree studies or a combination of prior TAFE nursing studies and work experience.

In designing the accelerated degree program, the University did not attempt to map the curriculum content of the three-year degree against the relevant TAFE programs. Instead, the University recognises the prior learning of both graduate and professional entry applicants when granting them entry to the two-year program, and then delivers an accelerated integrated curriculum that caters for the diversity of students.

In addition, the accelerated degree needed to comply with University policy which dictates that no more than 45% of students commencing in a particular degree program can be admitted on the basis of prior TAFE qualifications.

**Drivers and benefits of the arrangements**

The drivers behind the establishment of the accelerated degree are outlined above. The reported benefits of the accelerated program include:

- capacity to produce Division 1 nurses in a shorter timeframe, thus assisting in meeting workforce shortages
- provision of study and career pathways for generalist degree graduates and Division 2 nurses
- enhanced learning experiences for all students derived from the diversity of the student cohorts.

In addition, the University reports that the two-year accelerated program has developed a quality reputation due to four specific aspects of the program design:

- Theory and clinical practice are heavily integrated, with students doing two days per week of theory at the University and three days per week of clinical practice. This enables students to apply immediately the theory in practice. Other nursing programs tend to have blocks of theory followed by blocks of clinical practice.

- In contrast to other programs where students typically undertake clinical placements at a variety of different organisations and locations, students are attached to one organisation and the same clinical teachers for the duration of the program. This is perceived to reduce student anxiety and build trust and working relationships that enhance learning experiences.

- Clinical teachers are employed by the University, from within the affiliated hospital with defined job descriptions, and they report weekly to the subject co-ordinator on how students are progressing in clinical settings and areas needing attention in the academic program.

- The course is designed to have a large component of its delivery in the workplace setting – 62% of the course is clinical content, as opposed to the mandated 45% set by the Nurses Board of Victoria.

### Data on student transfer

The University reports strong demand for the two-year accelerated degree at its Parkville campus. The number of commencing domestic students for 2002-2006, by basis of admission and campus, are reported below. The University decided to discontinue commencements in the Shepparton program in 2006, due to insufficient demand from applicants who met the University’s admission requirements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basis of admission and campus</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Entry</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parkville</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shepparton</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-total</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Entry</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parkville</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shepparton</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-total</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>31</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The accelerated program attracts both domestic and international full fee paying students. In 2006, for example, there were 18 domestic full fee-paying students...
Over the last three years, there has been a marked decline in the percentage of commencing domestic students gaining entry on the basis of TAFE qualifications and professional experience. This is due to the phase out of the Shepparton program which was predominantly catering to Division 2 nurse admissions and a drop in demand from Division 2 nurses for entry to the metropolitan program.

Statistics provided by the University indicate a total student attrition rate of 25% over the three-year period 2003-2005 (including both domestic and international students). The University reports that this attrition rate is lower than the 35% expected by most universities and DEST. The rate was higher for professional entry students (33%) than it was for graduate entry students (21%). The majority of these students withdrew for reasons such as wrong career choice, finances, health or other responsibilities. Over the three-year period, 4% of students did not continue due to academic progress issues, including 2% of graduate entry students and 8% of professional entry students.

Governance and accreditation

The accelerated Bachelor of Nursing Science degree is subject to accreditation by the Victorian Nurses Board every five years. The University also liaises closely with the Board when assessing international applications for granting credit or credit transfer to ensure that candidates will meet the criteria for registration as Division 1 nurses on completion of the accelerated program. The degree is also subject to the regular internal University of Melbourne quality assurance processes.

Evaluation and monitoring

As noted above, the University tracks student attrition on an on-going basis. It also tracks entry scores, Grade Point Averages and graduate destinations. It is reported that students gaining admission on the basis of TAFE qualifications and professional work experience often encounter difficulties in making the transition to higher education. A number of factors are involved:

- the science-based nature of the degree program
- many of the professional entry students did not have the academic standards required to achieve entry to undergraduate degrees in the first place and they consequently struggle with the academic requirements of the degree program
- prior training and work experience has served to enculturate students to a task-focused professional orientation rather than the higher-order problem-solving orientation required of Division 1 nurses.

Not all professional entry students, however, experience difficulties and in fact some of them prove to be exceptional students.

Promotion and marketing

The University employs a number of approaches to promote and market the accelerated degree:
• annual Nursing Expo held at the Melbourne Exhibition Centre
• University website
• standard course promotion materials
• targeted information sessions.

Barriers and issues
The University has not experienced any significant barriers in introducing and delivering its accelerated program. As noted earlier, an issue identified by the University concerns the capacity of professional entry students to manage the academic requirements of the program. Considerable additional staff effort is required to support some students through the program.

The University also questions the effectiveness of the government policy emphasis on upgrading Division 2 nurses to Division 1 nurses. In the University’s experience, upgrading is not necessarily as straightforward or successful as some stakeholders may imagine, and may undermine the important role of the Division 2 nurse in the changing workforce environment. The University supports emerging proposals to create a two-tiered career structure within the Division 2 nurse classification that allows Division 2 nurses to expand their scope of practice. This would provide an enhanced career pathway for Division 2 nurses, without requiring a significant transition to higher education study, and a substantially different professional nursing role.

A related issue concerns Division 2 nurses working in the aged care sector. The University notes that the accelerated degree program opens up many new opportunities for Division 2 nurses and that aged care is not a popular career choice for Division 1 nurses, except perhaps when working as part of an aged person assessment team. As a consequence, there is no guarantee that Division 2 nurses coming from the aged care sector will return to that sector on graduation from the accelerated degree.

Future developments
The University of Melbourne has announced plans for radical reform of the structure of its academic programs. From 2008, in most but not all cases, Melbourne degrees will be based around five or six generalist three-year undergraduate programs leading into postgraduate professional training or research training. For the nursing program, this will be a two-year ‘entry to practice’ masters degree.

This development will mean that Division 2 nurses will need to complete a generalist undergraduate program before proceeding to a professional Masters degree that would qualify them for registration as Division 1 nurses. Under the new academic framework, the standard and accelerated Bachelor of Nursing Science programs will be discontinued. It is unclear at this stage as to the credit transfer arrangements that would be made available to Division 2 nurses wishing to undertake a generalist entry-to-practice program at the University of Melbourne.
9.5 Summary

The key features of this case study can be summarised as follows:

- The case study demonstrates the diversity in study pathways for TAFE nursing graduates. Pathways include:
  - credit for prior TAFE qualifications, ranging from the equivalent of half a semester’s study to the equivalent of a whole semester’s study
  - a bridging program that qualifies students to enter the second year of an undergraduate nursing degree
  - an articulation arrangement based on an enriched TAFE Diploma of Nursing curriculum that qualifies students to enter the second year of an undergraduate nursing degree
  - an ‘accelerated’ two-year nursing degree program that accepts applicants meeting the entry criteria of an approved degree or diploma, or TAFE certificate IV qualifications combined with specified professional work experience.

- The credit transfer arrangements and the ‘accelerated’ program are ‘generic’ in nature, insofar as they apply to any TAFE graduate in the state (or equivalent from interstate). The bridging program and articulation arrangement, however, are based on specific agreements between the universities concerned and local TAFE institutes, and have involved the development of new or the modification of existing TAFE curricula to achieve equivalence with the first year of the higher education degree.

- All institutions report the benefits of the credit transfer and articulation arrangements as including:
  - provision of study and career pathways for enrolled nurses
  - enrichment of the learning experience for all students through a more diverse student body within undergraduate nursing programs
  - fast-tracking the delivery of registered nurse graduates to the health workforce.

- Where universities and TAFE institutes are working in partnership, they report that the trust and working relationships developed through their combined efforts in establishing nursing pathways are having beneficial spin-offs in other areas of collaborative activity.

- Two institutions, however, cast doubt on the wisdom of promoting the upgrading of enrolled nurses as a strategy for addressing critical nurse workforce shortages. In addition, while two institutions report that, after making the initial transition to the higher education learning environment, pathway students perform no differently to other students, one institution reported that pathway students typically experience substantial difficulties and require significant additional support to complete their programs.

- The case study highlights the significant differences across jurisdictions in nurse education, training and registration requirements and differing
views about the most appropriate strategies for providing enrolled nurses with career paths and for meeting workforce shortages.
10 Vignettes

10.1 Charles Darwin University

Background

Charles Darwin University (CDU) was formed in 2003 through the amalgamation of the former Northern Territory University, Centralian College in Alice Springs, the Northern Territory Rural College in Katherine and the Menzies School of Health Research. CDU has a very strong focus on establishing a fully integrated dual sector university. This is evidenced through both the policy framework and operational systems which have been established with seamlessness and pathways between VTE and higher education being an integral feature of the CDU approach. The CDU approach is enshrined at the highest levels of the University’s management and leadership structure.

Structures

The CDU Strategic Plan sets out the drivers for the CDU model which aims to develop a range of practical and automatic pathways between VTE and higher education maximising articulation between the University’s 115 higher education courses and 254 VTE programs. The Strategic Plan identifies integration of VTE and higher education as a key theme involving ‘expanding opportunities for articulation, credit transfer and progression and promoting cross-sectoral multiple awards’. The Strategic Plan states:

Nowhere else should articulation and credit transfer be more simple and effective; multiple pathways to study add another dimension to flexible delivery.

To give effect to these strategic objectives, the CDU management structure is integrated, with a joint Academic Board providing for equal numbers of higher education academic and VTE teacher/trainer representatives. The recent AUQA report on CDU noted the uniqueness of this management structure within a dual sector institution. The University is structured into three faculties each with a number of schools. Each school is managed through an integrated VTE/higher education model of equal representation. Academic planning in each of the schools over the next five years includes the strategic development of educational pathways between VTE and higher education and joint higher education/VTE courses. Other aspects of integration include VTE staff involved in research and staff teaching across the sectors.

Pathways are the responsibility of the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Community and Access). This portfolio was formed in 2004 and covers four areas - Indigenous support, articulated pathways, regional and remote and community engagement.

The University has a range of policies pertaining to admission, credit transfer and articulation based on the current AVCC Guidelines on Qualification Linkages but with additional support structures to maximise admission and credit from the certificate IV, diploma and advanced diploma levels. Credits will be issued on the basis of all VTE qualifications at the same level, and offered by CDU, as having the same credit value for higher education courses in the same field and credit will be issued as part of the enrolment process. A qualification mapping process was started in June 2005 to enable this approach to be implemented in 2006.
The university has established a pathways office under the Community and Access portfolio as part of the overall strategy on integration. This office is undertaking the mapping and is also responsible for a VTE campaign to notify existing VTE qualification holders within the Territory about the new arrangements. An advertisement was posted in late November 2005 with aim of encouraging VTE qualification holders to enrol with credit in 2006, and letters were posted to some 16,000 existing VTE qualification holders in the Northern Territory. Again in 2006, letters were sent to more than 1,000 students who had completed a VTE certificate IV, diploma and advanced diploma informing them of the credit arrangements and pathways.

### Credit transfer policies and procedures

Information about credit is clearly set out on the web with information marked for prospective students and policy information for staff. The web contains the course guide for 2006 which sets out the basis of admission including certificate IV or higher and the standard credit available for each VTE qualification level into a related bachelor degree. Whereas credit was previously an individual school responsibility, it will be automatic under the new arrangements. The web will be used strategically to market and inform all persons about the policy.

CDU is also reaching out to other RTOs and the secondary school sector with the aim of establishing relationships based on co-operation and partnership. These include Letters of Intent covering VTE in schools and pathways with over 70 high schools in the Northern Territory. A MOU has been signed with Batchelor Institute and the mapping of its courses is a high priority. Another MoU is planned with the newly established Australian Technical College in Darwin.

The CDU approach is still work-in-progress but is designed to support and represent the higher education needs of the Northern Territory population. The impact is already visible with the number of higher education enrolments based on a VTE qualification jumping from 4.94% in 2004 to 8.42% in 2005.

#### 10.2 Canberra Institute of Technology

### Background

The Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT) is the largest VTE provider in the Australian Capital Territory offering accredited courses from five faculties across five main campuses in Canberra. CIT provides training for over 20,000 enrolments.

### Credit transfer policies and procedures

The main higher education partner with CIT is the University of Canberra (UC). Arrangements between CIT and UC cover a large number of credit agreements. These are governed by a MOU between the two providers, which has established standard credit arrangements for related courses of study. The MoU recognises four types of arrangements - articulated courses based on joint course development; credit based on considerable overlap between the VTE qualification and the related

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92 See: [www.cdu.edu.au](http://www.cdu.edu.au)
93 Figures supplied by CDU.
higher education qualification; variable credit; and unit level credit. Category 1
operates on the basis of block credit with Category 2 also operating on the same
basis, where possible, providing the following credit outcomes:

- 50% credit advanced diploma to three-year bachelor degree
- 37.5% credit advanced diploma to four-year bachelor degree
- 33% credit diploma to three-year bachelor degree
- 25% credit diploma to four-year bachelor degree.

Information on the policies and the CIT Agreement are clearly displayed on the UC
and CIT websites. This includes details of all the current arrangements across 53
different fields identified in a specific publication *Pathways Guide 2006* produced by
CIT.

All credit transfer is conducted in accordance with various UC policies. These
include separate policies on articulation, granting of credit and RPL. The
articulation policy is the latest (August 2005) and has been developed to ‘sharpen
UC’s articulation activities’ and to ‘review existing processes and arrangements in
accordance with AQF and AVCC guidelines’. The articulation policy makes
reference to arrangements with other VTE institutions but the website does not
identify the existence of such.

The credit initiatives and MoU between CIT and UC are managed and monitored by
a joint Status Committee comprising high level representation of both providers.
The process of negotiating an agreement is initiated by CIT sending details of any
new VTE course/Training Package through to UC Student Services who forward
the information to the relevant faculty. The outcomes are then reviewed and signed
off by the Status Committee that meets three times a year, and then the details are
posted to the *Pathways Guide* that is updated annually. The *Pathways Guide* also
includes a small number of credit arrangements for students moving from
university to CIT.

Other initiatives include a joint CIT/UC project funded by DEST under the
Collaboration and Structural Reform Fund to develop further the CIT partnership
through establishment of a UC/CIT Cross-Sectoral office which will be responsible
for establishing and managing a Resource-Sharing and Collaboration Program as
well as a Pathways Facilitation Program.

CIT is developing a national perspective in negotiating credit arrangements and the
*Pathways Guide* produced by CIT lists a number of other negotiated credit
arrangements with other eleven other universities.

CIT also has a MoU with ANU, which is currently under re-development. The
number of credit transfer arrangements with ANU is limited but developing. A key
initiative is the development of a jointly delivered associate degree/bachelor
program in three fields – music, engineering and science. The associate degree is
delivered by CIT with ANU issuing the award. Students can progress on to the
bachelor degree receiving two years of credit for the three-year degree.

Agreements have also been reached or are under negotiation with a number of
universities operating in other states, particularly NSW, including:

- University of Western Sydney
The arrangements with these other universities are established through individual faculty/staff negotiations but all are advised and then verified through CIT’s Educational Development Centre before being placed on the Pathways Guide. These initiatives focus on developing credit initiatives for CIT students in fields where ACT’s universities may not provide specific programs or where another university may have a stronger reputation.

CIT has been offering higher education programs since 1995 but the offerings are limited to six programs - three bachelor degree and three postgraduate programs. The three bachelor degrees are articulated with advanced diplomas delivered by CIT which carry 50% credit towards the bachelor degree qualification.

CIT’s policy is to expand its current higher education provision as a means of offering greater diversity in higher education through relevant courses based on VTE pedagogy. This strategy is seen as an additional and important means of creating articulation between VTE and higher education alongside its negotiated agreements with other higher education providers. CIT strongly supports development of a common credit system.94

10.3 The University of Melbourne

This vignette is included to provide information about credit transfer and articulation in a Group of Eight university. It includes additional material about admissions processes, although these are not the direct focus of this project, because admission is the main barrier to credit transfer in universities of this type.

Background information

The University of Melbourne was established in 1853, the first university in Victoria and the second in Australia. It was a founding member of the Group of Eight coalition of Australia’s leading research-intensive universities. It has also played a key role in the development of the global Universitas 21 alliance, an international network of the world’s leading research universities. The mission of the University of Melbourne is to become one of the finest universities in the world.

The University of Melbourne is a large university, with over 39,000 students of which approximately 4,000 are research students, over 12,000 are postgraduates and

94 Peter Veenker, Chief executive of CIT, in CIT Submission to DEST on Future Accreditation and Approval processes for Higher Education, April 2005.
over 8,000 are international students. Although the majority of the University’s operations are at Parkville near the Melbourne CBD, there are several small regional campuses and centres.

Transfer from TAFE

Although not necessarily an accurate measure of students transferring to the University of Melbourne from TAFE, the DEST Higher Education Statistics Collection shows that admissions from TAFE to undergraduate courses at the University of Melbourne are low (approximately 2% of commencements in 2004 compared with the national average of 9.4%), but not as low as three other Group of Eight universities.

Specific pathways

Pathways from TAFE are provided by two particular faculties that have special arrangements in place – Education and Land and Food Resources. There are also pathways within the School of Nursing.

The nursing pathway provides for structured credit transfer in the form of an accelerated program in the Bachelor of Nursing Science for students applying with VTE qualifications.

The Faculty of Education has very detailed structured credit transfer arrangements in place for students applying to various Education courses from a range of VTE providers.

Until 2006, the Faculty of Land and Food Resources included a school offering VTE courses and students were able to move from courses offered at this level to higher education courses also offered in this and other faculties. These courses were offered at a range of the University’s regional campuses throughout Victoria. In 2005, the decision was made to move these VTE-level courses to TAFE providers and for the University to provide only higher education courses. The aim is to maintain similar pathways for students, although the move did cause some concern among students and the local communities in these regions. For 2006, the Faculty has changed its advanced diplomas into associate degrees. Although not stated, the intention appears to be that students may gain admission into an associate degree with lower ENTER scores than bachelor degrees so providing an entry pathway for a wider range of students including those from TAFE. The information currently available in course handbooks is not clear about how much credit will be given if students wish to move from an associate degree into a bachelor degree within the Faculty.

Credit transfer policies and procedures

For students not involved in these specific pathways but seeking admission to the University of Melbourne and hoping to be granted credit for their VTE studies, the process is one of applying for admission through the Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre through the non-Year 12 category and then applying for credit if admitted. In some cases, a student may seek an indication of credit that is to be granted prior to admission, but some faculty policies specifically preclude this and allow application for credit only after entry.
All decisions about credit are made at the faculty level according to the policies and procedures set down by each faculty. Such a devolved process is common within Group of Eight universities and is the way in which any admission decision is made when special consideration is required. This process also applies to students seeking credit for prior higher education studies.

The University Student Handbook includes the following:

Credit for studies already completed at tertiary level may be granted if any of your previous studies are:

- comparable in content;
- equivalent in standard; and
- suitable to be included as part of your University of Melbourne course.

In some courses you may qualify for credit for experience relevant to a course.

Faculties specify the maximum credit allowable, but will always try to give eligible students maximum credit for previous relevant study. Each faculty publishes faculty credit guidelines and will ensure that credit is awarded at the time of enrolment.

Contact your faculty for further advice.

Some faculty websites include easy access to information about credit transfer from the faculty homepage or the faculty’s future students homepage, but in other faculties the information is more difficult to find. Given the devolved nature of the policies and processes, there is significant variation in how each faculty approaches credit transfer. One faculty includes only information about credit for international students, another specifically excludes credit for VTE studies, one allows for credit for TAFE studies but mentions no credit has been given to date, and most faculties provide the opportunity for credit to be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

The main focus of most of the faculty policies is credit transfer from other higher education studies both from within the University of Melbourne and from other universities. This reflects the number of applications received from students trying to gain entry to University of Melbourne courses (particularly those with more competitive entry) through upgrading their entry score by performing well in other higher education studies.

**The admissions context**

Like other Group of Eight universities, the University of Melbourne has heavy demand for the majority of its courses and there are far more applicants than funded places available. In these universities and in very competitive courses across all universities, gaining admission is the main barrier for VTE students and the granting of credit becomes more secondary in importance. The fact is that students who are using their VTE studies to gain entry are very unlikely to be ranked as highly as the top performing school leavers against whom they are competing for places in the vast majority of courses.

Regulation 11.1.R3 *Principles of Selection for Entry to Courses* states that Council may set targets or quotas for places for TAFE students, but there is no obvious evidence that this provision is being used.
Given this very competitive environment for entry, the University of Melbourne has worked hard to make its admissions processes fair and easily understood by prospective students and their parents. The University has a website that explains the process.\(^5\)

Underlying the process is the ranking of all students who apply and this is carried out by VTAC by converting their results to an ENTER (Equivalent National Tertiary Ranking) score. Unlike some universities, the University of Melbourne publishes a guaranteed entry standard for each of its courses and all students with ENTER scores above this level will be offered a place. Government supported places are offered to the top-ranked applicants, and the lower-ranked students above the guaranteed minimum are offered fee-paying places.

The median ENTER score across the whole University in 2004 was just under 95 and nearly 70% of VCE students with a score of 99 or more were attracted to the University of Melbourne. Applications from VTE students are assessed individually by faculties and slotted into this ranking process on the basis of overall performance.

**Future directions**

In the AUQA audit report for the University of Melbourne, released earlier in 2006, there was mention of an Equity and Access Audit carried by the University out in 2004 which identified the need for improved access for the non-school leaver cohort. One of the affirmations within the AUQA report was support for the University’s recognition of this need to improve access from groups other than school leavers such as through articulation arrangements with TAFE. The University will be required to indicate what response it intends to make on this point.

In December 2005, the Council of the University endorsed a new strategy proposed by the Vice-Chancellor after a consultative process during 2005. One of the new strategies that the University will develop is broader, more general undergraduate programs, with most professional courses moved into the postgraduate area, similar to the Bologna model in Europe. Although the new strategy indicates that the University will ensure it maintains access for a diverse range of students, the impact on credit transfer and general access for students with VTE backgrounds is unclear. If one outcome is to raise entry levels to all undergraduate programs even higher, there will be little chance that students will be able to access the University of Melbourne via a VTE pathway. However, senior staff within the University are aware of this issue and are looking at ways in which current credit transfer and articulation arrangements can be improved and built into the proposed new structures as they are developed.

### 10.4 Central Coast Campus, Ourimbah

**Background**

The multi-sector campus at Ourimbah on the Central Coast of NSW was established in 1989 and is a partnership involving TAFE NSW Hunter Institute, the University of Newcastle and the Central Coast Community College.

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Ownership of the land on which the campus is built is vested in the NSW Minister for Education and Training. However, the University of Newcastle Act states that the University Council ‘has the control and management of that property’. A Memorandum of Understanding between TAFE NSW Hunter Institute and the University of Newcastle defines the co-operative relationship of the two partners in relation to this issue.

Ourimbah is a separate, but linked, partnership from that discussed in the University of Newcastle case study. Governance is assisted by a separate Memorandum of Understanding that establishes it as a joint educational campus involving higher education, VTE and community education with linkages to schools and business. Other tenants on the site include business, environment, health, research, food and regional network organisations. The main educational objectives of the campus are to develop and implement a joint educational profile that extends opportunities to the region and maximises pathways between the sectors.  

The initial driver for establishing the Ourimbah campus was the need to provide a tertiary education precinct on the Central Coast, but this was expanded into a concept that would provide ‘improved educational opportunities and maximum educational benefits for the people of the region’ by incorporation of VTE and Community College partners on the same site.

The region is characterised by an increasing population and economic growth, but low educational participation rates. State and local government inquiries have focused on education as a key lever in building the community and the region.

Campus management is advised by an Advisory Board responsible to NSW DET and the University of Newcastle, comprising the Director of the Hunter Institute, the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Newcastle, the Pro Vice-Chancellor Central Coast Campuses and the Campus Manager (Wyong/Gosford), together with school, business, staff and student representatives. The Board is charged with advising on strategic directions and monitoring organisational and financial performance. The Board’s vision is to turn Ourimbah into ‘a national leader in integrated training/education and research to meet the economic needs of the central coast.’

At an educational level, the University and the TAFE are separate entities, with separate teaching staff, and each is responsible for its own credentials, but planning is undertaken jointly through information-sharing. Facilities, support staff and services are shared. The University employs all non-teaching staff and Hunter Institute is invoiced for its share of operating costs.

The campus is well-designed and well-resourced, providing a real option for students to be involved in any or all three tiers of post-secondary education on the one site and to achieve their education objectives in the region. It also provides an environment that supports closer relationships between the sectors and between students and staff.

96 Memorandum of Understanding between University of Newcastle, TAFE NSW Hunter Institute and Central Coast Community College [www.ccc.newcastle.edu.au/ccb/docs/MOU_1pdf](www.ccc.newcastle.edu.au/ccb/docs/MOU_1pdf)

97 Ibid.

Credit transfer

The development of seamless pathways is one of the key policies of the campus, achieved through joint planning of programs and the development of articulation arrangements appropriate to the region.

While some specific credit transfer agreements may be developed on site, it is the central agreements negotiated between Hunter Institute and the University of Newcastle that are the main basis for credit transfer applied at the campus. The Ourimbah website contains a link that takes users to this database (currently being reviewed and updated).

Pathway options through joint program design have been the responsibility of the Central Coast Pathways Committee, a Committee of the governing board comprising representatives of the three partner organisations with a remit to meet three or four times a year to identify and develop pathway options. A Pathways Officer was employed to undertake the development work and provide a focal point for these activities on the campus. The Committee last met in 2004.

One outcome of the Pathways Officer appointment was the development of a series of qualification pathway employment maps. These maps were created to assist the students of the campus and local careers advisors in understanding the study options available at the Ourimbah campus and how these could be developed from school through VTE and into higher education to support various careers. Some 40 different employment areas were identified and placed on the campus website.

An example of the pathway possibilities at Ourimbah is in children’s services area where students may undertake the appropriate VTE in Schools course, apply the credit gained to a certificate III, which is in turn embedded in a diploma, that then allows entry with credit (as per agreements) into a bachelor degree, all available on the one campus.

A significant issue for both credit transfer and articulation is that most of the Ourimbah TAFE programs are at certificate III level or below, leaving gaps to support the pathways into the University’s courses. Part of the Pathways Committee’s role is to look at options to extend the capacity for the campus to offer pathways, however this is not possible in all areas.

Information about the campus is provided on a special website via the University’s main webpage. Information is available about the pathways guides and there are links to credit transfer arrangements via either the University of Newcastle website or the TAFE NSW website.99

10.5 Cradle Coast Campus, Burnie

The University of Tasmania established its North-West Centre at Burnie in 1995 and in 2005 it was re-named the Cradle Coast Campus as a response to growing demand and consequent expansion of the University’s programs in the region. The

University’s strong commitment to educational provision in the north-west region of Tasmania is recognition that this area has one of the lowest educational participation rates within Australia. Many of the initiatives to raise educational participation have involved collaboration between the educational providers in the region, including TAFE Tasmania, University of Tasmania and schools, most often in partnership with local government and business. In order to accommodate growth in student numbers, in 2005 the University opened some student and teaching facilities on the TAFE campus which is only a short distance from the University campus. University students at this facility may use the TAFE cafeteria and library.

The overall aim in Burnie has been to create an educational precinct that also includes the secondary college and other educational providers. This precinct concept is captured within the Creative Pathways project which won an Australian Award for University Teaching in 2004 in the category of educational services for the community. The Burnie TAFE campus and University’s Cradle Coast Campus rely on centrally developed articulation and credit transfer arrangements and therefore these are the same as those that operate across all campuses of the University. The University’s website lists a range of credit transfer arrangements across many of its courses. These include articulation arrangements that allow students in information systems or computing to study across both institutions for dual awards. At the Cradle Coast Campus, the focus has been more on collaborative efforts to raise the profile of education and increase educational participation rates across all sectors rather than the development of specific VTE to higher education credit transfer and articulation pathways.

10.6 Marcus Oldham College

Marcus Oldham College claims to be Australia’s leading rural business management college with its courses developed in close consultation with industry. It is accredited as both a VTE and higher education provider. At the higher education level, it has accreditation for a Diploma of Agribusiness, an Associate Degree in Agribusiness, Bachelor of Business (Agribusiness) and Bachelor of Business (Agricultural Management). Higher education students at Marcus Oldham College are eligible for FEE-HELP. The bachelor degrees are four-year programs with the fourth year supplemented by units that can be taken through Deakin University in which students are enrolled as non-award students. Students who have taken advanced diplomas, diplomas or associate diplomas at Marcus Oldham College are given credit and admitted directly to the fourth year of the bachelor degrees. This provides a set of nested awards with various entry and exit points for students. Credit for applicants from other institutions is assessed on a case-by-case basis, but general guidelines indicate that even students with a previous bachelor degree will still be required to complete bridging units in addition to the full fourth year of the Marcus Oldham degree plus meet a requirement of two years of full-time employment in an agricultural field.

10.7 Australian Institute of Public Safety

The Australian Institute of Public Safety was established in 1990 as an Australian owned independent tertiary education provider. All Institute programs are designed in close consultation with employers, industry, academics and professional associations. It is accredited as both a VTE and higher education
provider. It offers graduate certificates and diplomas and degree courses in criminal justice, public safety and security. Higher education students at the Institute are eligible for FEE-HELP.

The website of the Institute has clear information about credit arrangements for prospective students. Credits are considered only on a case-by-case basis, after enrolment, by the Institute’s Credit Transfer Committee. Credit is based on the subjects successfully completed, the detailed content of those subjects, the marks received by the student in those subjects and the level of the course. The only subjects considered for credit into a bachelor degree are those in a course at diploma level or above. Credit for VTE courses is not granted in graduate certificates or graduate diplomas. No more than 50% of the enrolled course can be exempted. The Institute does not grant block credit and has no articulation arrangements with other providers. Its own VTE courses are not advertised specifically as leading to credit within higher education awards either within the Institute or elsewhere.

10.8  **Perth Institute of Business and Technology**

Perth Institute of Business and Technology (PIBT) is a non self-accrediting higher education private provider and Registered Training Organisation. PIBT has developed in close association with Edith Cowan University (ECU) and is based on the ECU Churchlands campus. PIBT students are able to access all ECU services and facilities. While the Institute’s principal articulation pathway is from its state accredited higher education diploma courses to ECU degrees and, as such, is strictly speaking outside of the scope of this project, the PIBT/ECU model provides a useful example of a close partnership between two institutions based on an articulation agreement and a shared campus.

PIBT diplomas are based on the first year of ECU degrees in areas such as business, hospitality, information technology and communications. Courses are delivered by PIBT staff with assessment and moderation assessment undertaken by ECU staff. ECU is represented on the Institute’s Academic Board and courses are approved by ECU. As such, the arrangement between PIBT and ECU could be seen as an alternative means of delivering the first year of the ECU degree program, as much as a credit transfer arrangement. However, PIBT students are able to exit with a full qualification should they not proceed to the ECU degree program.

Under this model, credit recognition and confidence in course outcomes are strengthened by the common elements of the course and University involvement in the assessment and moderation process. PIBT is able to position itself in the marketplace, particularly for international students, by providing a clear pathway to a degree with credit for students who would not otherwise be eligible. The University benefits through access to an on-going supply of students who have proven their capacity to meet university course requirements and who are familiar with the university environment.

The model may have broader application to credit transfer arrangements between VTE and higher education institutions, where credit transfer is based on nested qualifications and on shared campuses or on precincts. However, the different authorising and approval requirements for VTE diplomas and advanced diplomas, and VTE assessment principles and requirements would limit the extent to which higher education providers could undertake the same oversight role that ECU does in relation to PIBT programs.
11 Themes from the Case Studies

11.1 Introduction

The seven case studies and the vignettes provide a snapshot of a range of current practices, future directions and issues relating to credit transfer and articulation from VTE to higher education within Australia. Each of the case studies presents its own story, but each also contributes to a broader understanding of current arrangements. The case studies have been selected to represent a range of practices, contexts and institutional arrangements. However, we do not claim that they are representative of all situations or that they represent all practices. From our research, it is evident that there are other equally significant partnerships and cross-sector credit transfer arrangements in place that not only broadly mirror the structures and outcomes of these examples but also have their own individual perspectives and nuances. It should be noted that, even within the examples we have documented, the picture painted may only be part of a wider canvas of multiple partnership arrangements. In this respect, the case studies are not intended to be complete or comprehensive descriptions of the selected sites. Rather, each focuses on key aspects which emerged from the consultations and which highlight specific types of credit transfer and articulation arrangements.

A number of common factors and issues emerged from the case studies. These are considered below and provide guidance in framing the final report and recommendations of this project.

Two general observations are applicable to all case studies.

1. No single factor is more important than any other in assisting the development of credit transfer and articulation, nor does any one factor stand out in a particular case study. Rather, there is a complex inter-play of many factors that provides the support for success in this area.

2. The development of credit transfer and articulation arrangements is not static. All the sites have been marked by phases of development when there are significant steps forward interspersed by other periods of lesser activity for a variety of reasons, but there is overall movement in the direction of enhancing or extending the focus on credit transfer and articulation.

11.2 Enabling factors

Across the case studies, it is evident that certain factors contribute to and provide support mechanisms for the development of credit transfer and articulation. These include:

- drivers
- management/administration systems
- people
- pedagogical factors.
11.2.1 Drivers

Drivers are mechanisms or factors that influence practice and are both internal and external in focus. In all cases, the external context plays a significant role in the establishment and continuity of specific partnerships and arrangements. Contextual drivers may be institutional, local, regional, state, national or international and, in most cases, a mix of these will be in play.

The imperatives that drive credit transfer and articulation may centre on:

- enhancing economic development, better meeting the educational needs of the community and industries, increasing educational participation, developing more effective student experiences and outcomes, improving access and equity, enhancing market position, managing student load or a mix of these.

External political drivers can also be an enabling factor. These may be:

- explicit tools such as policy guidelines on credit transfer and articulation (referenced by all as benchmarks for practice) or direct structural reform (such as the establishment of dual sector institutions)
- indirect tools such as governmental inquiries or restructures designed for other purposes but which have positive spin-offs for credit transfer initiatives.

Internal drivers enabling credit transfer and articulation are:

- framed against the background of external drivers
- embedded within the philosophy and strategic focus of the institution/s involved
- related to the mission and strategic priorities of the institution/s
- expressed through the leadership of the organisation/s.

Internal and external drivers work together to provide a powerful influence in those institutions with a strong regional mission and which are located in an area where there is community, industry and government recognition of the importance of educational pathways for the social and economic development of the region.

One particular driver identified in these case studies, and not prominent in previous studies, is the relatively recent downturn in student demand for higher education that is being experienced most dramatically in regional and outer metropolitan areas. With all institutions other than the most prestigious metropolitan universities conscious of the need to maintain student load through diversifying their intake, credit transfer and articulation arrangements between VTE and higher education have received a boost in relative priority in many institutions.

11.2.2 Management and administration systems

Establishing effective systems for developing and managing credit transfer and articulation arrangements is a critical enabling factor. Effective systems are intrinsic to good practice. They enable good practice in credit transfer and articulation when they:
• include specific cross-sector management structures
• are institutionally and centrally focused, not dispersed or devolved to the faculty or campus level
• are embedded within mainstream institutional systems while also providing specific and explicit support for credit transfer and articulation
• address all aspects of managing these arrangements, including governance, co-ordination, development processes, monitoring, data management, information provision, promotion and evaluation.

Based on the models in place in the case study sites, effective systems might include all or most of the following:

• a documented legal basis for the arrangements such as a legislative base (for dual sector universities) or MoUs or formal agreements signed at the highest level of the organisations involved
• credit transfer and articulation identified as a strategic priority in key planning documents – including strategic plans, teaching and learning plans, and operational plans
• Key Performance Indicators or annual targets, specific objectives and action plans to manage and monitor progress
• joint or cross-sector institutional committees with appropriate representation for managing both the strategic and operational aspects of the arrangements
• specified arrangements for reporting back to senior leadership of the institution/s and to the community through annual reports or similar
• documented policies and procedures governing how credit transfer and articulation arrangements are managed
• policies and procedures governing the specific amount of credit granted to students
• nominated staff or administrative units resourced to act as a central repository for information and a co-ordination point for actions
• formal course development processes that include cross-sector membership, preferably through nominated academic/teacher representatives with expertise in the area and authority to determine credit and articulation arrangements in accordance with defined polices and procedures
• mechanisms to monitor and evaluate trends in student demand for credit, student outcomes and amounts of credit granted
• automatic mechanisms to update and re-negotiate arrangements when courses change or when agreements expire
• clear delegations for sign off of all arrangements by appropriate authorities
• centralised data management systems that record all approved credit transfer and articulation arrangements and that can provide reports on credit sought and obtained
• well designed and accessible websites (and other forms of information provision) to market and promote arrangements
• admission procedures that support and provide access to students who can take advantage of credit transfer and articulation (such as bonus points, direct entry or quota systems).

11.2.3 People

Systems are only as good as the people who lead, manage and operate within them. The people factor was identified in all of the case studies as central both to enabling and to progressing arrangements.

People who are critical to the process include:
• leaders – particularly at the top, but also those managers who are responsible for implementation
• doers – the people who develop and document the arrangements, whose commitment and energy are essential for progress and continuity
• evaluators – those who collect the data, undertake the research and report the outcomes, such as on student perceptions, progress rates and retention rates
• promoters – those who promulgate and disseminate information both to responsive audiences and to those who may not yet be convinced within and external to the institutional environment.

The case studies highlight that credit transfer and articulation arrangements may be initiated or driven by either VTE or higher education but that they are most effective when there are synergies between the leaders of institutions from both sectors. It is essential for leaders and supporters to be present in both sectors contributing to the partnership. The capacity of these individuals and groups (especially the leaders and doers) to achieve successful outcomes is influenced by the degree of mutual respect which exists for each other’s educational focus, teaching and learning environment and professionalism. This capacity is at the core of all the successful arrangements and partnerships examined.

11.2.4 Pedagogical factors

While cross-sectoral pedagogical factors are generally identified in the case studies as disabling factors, in some cases they have been turned into enabling factors through specific initiatives aimed at solving problems and issues that are identified. Examples include:
• developing additional pedagogical supports in VTE, such as subjects like mathematics in engineering, to ensure students meet prerequisites for entry to and are well prepared for subsequent success in their higher education studies
• providing university foundation studies or similar bridging courses to assist students in their transition between these two pedagogical environments and systems
• introducing graded assessment and reporting into VTE
• developing a common learning and delivery strategy for a Training Package qualification which may maximise content synergies and, hence, credit with the higher education qualification

• developing a common curriculum framework within a university with common structures and unit values

• developing cross-sectoral programs collaboratively – working together enhances the relationship building and demonstrates pedagogical synergies

• agreeing on key terminology as part of the development process to reduce confusion and misunderstanding.

11.3 Disabling factors

What can be presented as an enabler in one context might be considered a disabler in another. Similarly, some enabling factors may also have unintended consequences that act as barriers or disablers for effective outcomes. In this regard, high-level system changes, the introduction of new policies or practices in education, changes in economic circumstances or changes in higher education student demand may adversely impact on the operation of credit transfer and articulation arrangements. Specific examples provided in the course of these case studies include:

• reported implications of the Higher Education Support Act that discourage or prohibit initiatives that involve concurrent dual sector enrolments

• funding agreements for higher education institutions that are perceived to increase pressure to meet student load targets and constrain flexibility in load categories

• recent changes to the National Training Information Service that have made direct access to viewing units of competency in Training Packages more difficult and have impacted on mapping of content by universities

• shifts in strategic directions by one partner that might make cross-sectoral collaboration or credit transfer and articulation arrangements a lesser priority

• movement into higher education by VTE providers bringing them into competition with higher education providers and replacing VTE to higher education pathways with pathways that involve only higher education

• increased demand from school leavers for some institutions that means there is less priority on credit transfer and articulation from VTE.

Admissions systems and different approaches to determining ENTER scores based on VTE qualifications were cited as a significant disabler. While in some states, the Tertiary Admission Centres calculate ENTER scores and rankings for VTE student to provide points of comparison with school leavers, this is not the case in all states. In some states, the entire consideration of VTE qualifications and outcomes in admission processes is left up to the individual institutions.

The case studies also highlighted the difficulties arising from different language and terminology suggesting the need to agree on terms and meanings that are then explained through policy documents, websites and other materials.
Management and administration systems for credit transfer and articulation are essential but some aspects can also be problematic such as incompatible management information systems between the participating institutions.

Other internal systems and structures can also act as disablers. This was particularly evident in the examples of developing integrated and concurrent dual sector awards. Difficulties that were identified arose from cross-sectoral or institutional differences in:

- study year lengths and structures (semesters/trimesters)
- length and scope of study units or modules
- timetabling
- assessment and reporting deadlines
- student categories and calculation of student load
- funding and accountability requirements
- timing of the release of VTE student results so they are not available for university admission processes.

People can also act as disablers either directly or inadvertently. The case studies demonstrated that issues of cultural bias, entrenched attitudes, ignorance and disinterest are alive and well, most commonly at the faculty-level in both sectors. There is also a sense in all the case studies that these initiatives and achievements have not filtered evenly though to the teaching and academic workforces of these institutions as a whole. This appears to be so even where credit transfer and articulation arrangements are identified as a key strategic focus.

People external to the organisations, such as school teachers and careers advisors, can also act as disablers if they are unaware of or do not promote credit transfer and articulation pathways to prospective students.

Various pedagogical factors were identified through all of the case studies as disablers or potential disablers.

In some consultations, Training Packages were raised as an issue by university representatives but, in most cases, the pedagogical issue seems not to be the Training Package concept itself, nor competency-based training per se, but aspects of implementation of the design and structure of courses. Issues that were raised included:

- no common boundaries for breadth and depth in competency units, making content mapping and synergies with higher education more difficult
- no one-to-one matching (unlike the old curriculum model) meaning several competencies may need to be examined to reflect a relationship to one university unit or vice versa – resulting in a more onerous process
- gaps in content, especially in essential knowledge
- too much flexibility in qualification design, making credit more difficult to determine – a multiplicity of elective choices can mean that an added layer of individual assessment is required to ensure the student has the content knowledge to grant the advanced standing
- multiplicity of VTE qualifications within Training Packages and as accredited courses
- constant changes to Training Packages.

Some of these matters are being addressed through implementation of the High Level Review of Training Packages, but some may be exacerbated by other changes to Training Package structures such as the new Qualifications/Skills Frameworks which will increase flexibility.

Other pedagogical inhibitors raised were:
- rigidity in design of some discipline-based qualifications in higher education, due both to prerequisites and to professional accreditation requirements, making credit less easy to grant
- the need for graded assessment which is more relevant to student selection than determination of credit
- impacts on students of different learning styles, expectations and learning environments between VTE and higher education.

11.4 Cyclical factors

The case studies show that there are cycles of activity over a period of time within those institutions involved in cross-sectoral arrangements. In some periods, the drivers for cross-sectoral pathways may be stronger and the associated response may be high while, in other periods, there is less activity. These cycles arise from changed circumstances in both the enablers and disablers such as changes in:
- cycles of government interest, direction and support
- employer demands and perceptions of skill shortages
- the state of institutional health – issues other than cross-sectoral partnerships become a higher priority in circumstances where the university or VTE provider faces distracting internal financial or other difficulties
- market factors, such as student demand for university places.

11.5 MCEETYA Good Practice Principles

Given that this study arose from the development of the MCEETYA Good Practice Principles for Credit Transfer and Articulation from VET to Higher Education, one of the terms of reference for the study requires a consideration of how the case studies relate to the Good Practice Principles. The following consideration of practice in the case studies is not an evaluation of each site. Rather, the material summarises practice under the headings of the Good Practice Principles and provides perspectives on the Good Practice Principles gained in the course of conducting each case study. It is intended to assist further development of the Good Practice Principles. Each of the participant universities has responded to the AVCC Survey on the Good Practice Principles providing suggestions on how the Good Practice Principles could be improved and how they might act as a better guide to practice, particularly in the university context. Table 10.1 below summarises the perspectives gained in the case

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100 See Appendix B for details of the Good Practice Principles
studies. The final report provides further comment on the development and implementation of the Good Practice Principles.
Table 10.1: Overview of case study practice against MCEETYA Principles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principle</th>
<th>SBIT</th>
<th>ECU</th>
<th>University of Newcastle</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>SUT</th>
<th>BMHS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>SBIT focus is on articulation; QLD TAFE is responsible for credit transfer. Qld. unis and TAFE determine credit on the basis of content matching. All TAFE students regardless of institution are granted the credit. Articulation is based on content synergies, but is only applicable to partner organisations as it is a joint program.</td>
<td>ECU policies include 70% matching requirement for specified credit and broad equivalence for non-specified credit. Policies apply to all VTE students regardless of provider.</td>
<td>Credit transfer outcomes based on broad and specific equivalences between TAFE/University courses. Development is through joint committee that matches content and reviews equivalences.</td>
<td>Agreement with Flinders &amp; Adelaide based on content equivalences. UniSA agreement is a mix of broad equivalences from qualification level and specific content equivalences. Agreements with each university applicable to all TAFE students regardless of which institute.</td>
<td>SUT credit transfer agreements are based on matching content. SUT has wider range of agreements with internal TAFE. Individuals with the same award from another provider can access the outcomes.</td>
<td>Overall outcome equivalent to UNE degree.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>In case study partners, articulation is based on this principle. Widely publicised on web and other means.</td>
<td>Extent of formal pathways varies but credit widely available and publicised broadly with specific information on website.</td>
<td>Covers new and existing arrangements; discipline committees for new courses and modifications. Credit across all disciplines and most degrees. Promotion aimed at all; partners link to University website as single common site.</td>
<td>Varies between uni partners; UniSA comprehensive; Flinders review to update; Adelaide in some fields. Promoted by all partners; TAFE SA comprehensive; UniSA cover respective agreement.</td>
<td>System in place to trigger for all new and upgraded awards in higher education; agreements across all areas. Good website; letters to all TAFE entrants advising of credit at enrolment.</td>
<td>For single qualification only. Very well promoted through glossy promotion materials by BMHS; promotion not evident at UNE.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Credit applicable to all eligible students if evidence provided of completion; articulation embeds credit. Admission is separate.</td>
<td>Credit applicable to all eligible students if evidence provided of completion. Admission is separate.</td>
<td>Credit applicable to all eligible students if evidence provided of completion. Admission is separate.</td>
<td>Credit applicable to all eligible students if evidence provided of completion. Admission is separate.</td>
<td>Articulation arrangement so credit is embedded. Admission is in two stages; VTE then higher education in third year.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

101 See Appendix B.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4</th>
<th>All university policies on credit transfer publicly available. Formal credit agreements publicly available. Articulation models publicly available.</th>
<th>Old and new policy available. New policy will be widely promoted and will provide decisions that are more transparent and consistent.</th>
<th>University policies on credit transfer publicly available. Formal credit agreements publicly available. Some individual credit still exists; not publicly available.</th>
<th>All university policies on credit transfer publicly available. Formal credit agreements publicly available. Individual decisions against those agreements by Flinders &amp; Adelaide not publicly available.</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Objectives in determining credit/articulation include consideration of no disadvantage. Key issue is not credit but transition supports.</td>
<td>Reflected in new policy. One articulated course only for VTE partner.</td>
<td>Newcastle policy.</td>
<td>Objectives in determining credit/articulation include consideration of no disadvantage. Transition supports also raised as the main issue.</td>
<td>N/A - Students can only enter articulation pathway.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Universities follow AVCC Principles. State-wide TAFE agreements used in negotiating with different unis. No mechanism to look beyond partnership to review other agreements except individual research.</td>
<td>Follows AVCC Principles and also involved in TAFEWA pathways.</td>
<td>Follows AVCC Principles. Partner agreement forms basis of state-wide TAFE agreement. No mechanism to look beyond partnership to review other agreements except individual research.</td>
<td>Universities follow AVCC Principles. State-wide TAFE agreements used in negotiating credit with different unis. No mechanism to look beyond partnership to review other agreements except individual research.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>In part, processes for monitoring by SBIT still being established. Some uni partners monitor and record student progress and retention. No systematic recording of VTE students and how much credit received, as yet.</td>
<td>Comprehensive data not currently available but will be improved by new database.</td>
<td>Newcastle policy; evaluation covers mobility, progress and retention. No systematic recording of VTE students and how much credit received, as yet.</td>
<td>In part. Monitoring and evaluation are not strong. No systematic recording of VTE students &amp; how much credit received, as yet.</td>
<td>Data maintained on mobility, progress, retention and credits received; system has monitoring criteria.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Variable; moving to this model.</td>
<td>Covered by Faculty reviews and AUQA process.</td>
<td>Newcastle policy.</td>
<td>Report as required by AUQA.</td>
<td>Part of university reporting arrangements.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
11.6 Outcomes

While some outcomes are distinctive to the individual case studies, others are common across the case study sites. The following observations sum up the common outcomes from the case studies:

- Extensive structured credit transfer arrangements are in place or are being developed across a wide spectrum of disciplines and qualifications in the case study organisations.
- The credit transfer provided is usually applicable to a wider audience than the partner organisation/s.
- Credit is generally based on current AVCC Principles.
- Credit transfer focuses principally on similarities in content and discipline.
- Credit is awarded in different combinations (block, specified and unspecified) according to the structure and focus of matched and unmatched qualifications.
- Block credit is preferable from an administrative perspective but can be problematic and disadvantageous to the student if prerequisite understandings are not gained.
- The amount of credit granted needs to achieve a good balance of acknowledgement of prior studies without disadvantaging the student or diminishing quality.
- Credit transfer agreements are only sustainable when they are managed through effective development and co-ordination systems.
- Improvement in systems and processes is on-going.
- Systems for monitoring and evaluation of outcomes are not as developed as systems for implementation.
- There is a shift in focus towards centralised, structured credit and away from individual ad hoc arrangements.
- There is a trend towards the establishment of specialised ‘one stop shop’ services to provide information and advice to prospective students and to process applications for credit in an accurate, timely and responsive manner.
- Some case studies have a multi-layered approach – generalised credit outcomes applicable to all and enhanced outcomes for specified VTE partners through the admissions policy and/or integrated program developments.
- Generally there is good promotion of and web access to information on credit transfer and articulation, with details clearly set out in a user-friendly format.
- Processes and application forms for students applying for credit are generally accessible on the web.
- Articulation models are less numerous because they are more difficult to implement, with some case studies demonstrating difficulties and others...
demonstrating feasibility through ‘work-around’ processes to overcome the difficulties.

- Articulation arrangements appear to be part of future developments in all sites, despite the difficulties identified.

- Data collected by case study organisations demonstrate that TAFE students do as well as or better than other student cohorts – they are a good business proposition for receiving universities.

- Supportive admissions policies for VTE applicants and direct admission within articulation arrangements are providing easier and more transparent university access for VTE students.

- An emerging outcome is that of making credit transfer and articulation a central marketing message and branding theme.

- Partners involved in credit transfer and articulation arrangements gain other benefits such as participating in the development of innovative curriculum design, sharing knowledge, professional development and research.

- Credit transfer and articulation arrangements provide a base for effective regional initiatives and the development of educational precincts.
Appendix A

List of people consulted

Southbank Institute of TAFE and university partners

SBIT
- Ms Alicia Toohey, Educational Partnerships Unit (Key Contact)
- Ms Elizabeth Ruinard, Educational Partnerships Unit
- Ms Anne Johnston, Educational Partnerships Unit
- Ms Lynda Robertson, Educational Partnerships Unit
- Mr Craig Sherrin, Director
- Ms Robyn Tyler, Director Educational Services
- Mr Mike Diezmann, Director Education and Training
- Mr Rick Hiley, Director Business and Planning
- Mr Marty Rollings, Faculty Director, Hospitality and Tourism
- Ms Sally Lamoin, Faculty Director, Engineering and Design Technologies
- Ms Robin Pinel Laird, Faculty Director, Health, Human Services and Applied Sciences
- Mr Kevin Jones, Teacher - Civil Engineering
- Ms Joyce Shallcross, Teacher – Information Technology
- Ms Carrie McCarthy-Rose, Teacher - Children’s Services
- Ms Melinda Riches, Teacher - Hospitality Management

Griffith University
- Ms Leesa Wheelahan, Senior Lecturer, School of Vocational Technology and Arts Education
- Ms Mary Hassard, Credit Transfer & Articulation Manager Admissions, Student Administration
- Ms Jenny Cartmel, Lecturer, Human Services

QUT
- Mr Bruce McCallum, Associate Director Business Services, Division of Administrative Services
- Mr Cliff Button, Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Built Environment and Engineering
- Mr Don Field, Director, Academic Policy and Programs
- Mr Alan Tickle, Head of School, Faculty of Information Technology

Students
- Students from the Diploma/Advanced Diploma in Hospitality Management/Bachelor of Business (Hospitality Management) SBIT/GU, the Advanced Diploma Civil Engineering/Bachelor of Technology (Civil), SBIT/QUT, and Diploma/Advanced Diploma/Bachelor in Information Technology, SBIT/QUT
Edith Cowan University and partners

ECU
- Dr Glenda Jackson, Director Student Service Centre (Key Contact)
- Associate Professor Paul Maj, School of Computing and Information Science
- Ms Jenny Shortland, Dean’s Office, Faculty of Business and Law
- Students from the Nursing degree program

West Coast TAFE
- Mr Cliff Eber
- Ms Jenny Timms

University of Newcastle and partners

University of Newcastle
- Ms Krystine Avery, Governance and Policy (Key Contact)
- Professor Linda Connor, President of Academic Senate & Chair of the Committee
- Dr Sue Gould, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Services)
- Ms Helen Carter, Network for Innovation in Teaching and Learning
- Professor Stephen Crump, Pro Vice-Chancellor, Central Coast campuses
- Mr Rhys Palmer, Manager, Marketing and Communication
- Ms Jenny Roberts, Ourimbah

Hunter Institute of TAFE
- Ms Jillian Albrecht, Recognition Co-ordinator
- Ms Louise King, Director Educational Development
- Ms Jacqui Dean
- Ms Claire Williams, co-chair Arts, Communication & Media TUCC Working Group, co-chair, Health TUCC Working Group
- Mr Stephen Jennings, Director Marketing and Public Affairs

New England Institute of TAFE
- Mr Allan Parsons, Assistant Director, Educational Development
- Mr Bernard Ingle, Manager, Educational Development

North Coast Institute of TAFE
- Mr Geoff Baldry, Director, Educational Programs and Services
- Ms Joy Corben, Director, Corporate Relations and Marketing Services

TAFE SA & university partners

TAFE SA/DFEEST
- Liz Hooper, Manager, Training Package and Curriculum Unit, Education, Services and Programs (Key Contact)
- Ms Susan Young, Director, Education Services and Programs
- Ms Margaret James, Principal Policy Officer, Credit Transfer, Education, Services and Programs
- Mr Peter Klar, International Marketing
University of Adelaide

- Professor Fred McDougall, Acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor & Provost
- Ms Natakie Koutidis, Project Officer TAFE Articulation, Office of Deputy Vice-Chancellor & Provost
- Ms Raelene Wildy, Manager, Student Services and Marketing, Faculty of Sciences
- Ms Sophie Karanicolas, Senior Lecturer, School of Dentistry, Faculty of Health Sciences
- Ms Maree Balanzategui, Manager of Academic Programs, Faculty of Health Sciences
- Mrs Rosemary Priest, Manager, Student Administration, Student Administrative Services
- Dr Mike Keller, Joint Acting Head, School of Agriculture & Wine, Faculty of Sciences
- Professor Mike Innes, Executive Dean, Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences
- Mr Mike Liebelt, Head School of Electrical and Electronic Engineering, Faculty of Engineering, Computer & Mathematical Sciences

Flinders University

- Professor Joan Cooper, Deputy Vice-chancellor (Academic)
- Mr Steve Jones, Director, Academic and Student Services Division
- Mr Peter Torjul, Head, Careers and Employers Liaison Centre & Head, Admissions, Examination and Graduation
- Ms Laura Ward, Prospective Student Advisor, Admissions, Prospective Students Office
- Ms Kate Wiseman, Faculty of Health Sciences (Nursing and Midwifery)
- Mrs Ottaline Mew, Administration Officer, Faculty of Health Sciences (Disability Studies)
- Mrs Tina Comely, Deputy Registrar, Academic and Student Administration, Faculty of Health Sciences
- Ms Sue Manser, Administration Assistant, UG Programs, Academic and Student Administration, Faculty of Social Sciences
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• Students
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Appendix B

Good Practice Principles for Credit Transfer and Articulation from VET to Higher Education

(adopted by MCEETYA on 13 May 2005)

Preamble

Credit transfer and articulation arrangements increase opportunities for students with prior VET sector experience and qualifications to access higher education by facilitating student mobility between institutions and sectors.

Ministers recognise that the following good practice principles should not impinge upon or replace the academic integrity of courses and programs and the autonomy of individual institutions and providers in taking decisions on admission, prerequisites for ongoing study, and the levels and amounts of credit or articulation conferred in their courses and programs of study.

However, Ministers are agreed that students and intending students need reasonable assurance that they will be able to take education pathways which recognise previous work and study outcomes and give appropriate credit where these relate to further studies. Effective credit transfer and articulation is a key component in making lifelong learning a reality. It can also mean efficiencies in both time and money for students, institutions, and governments.

The principles set out below will apply nationally to all credit transfer and articulation arrangements by both recognised VET and Higher Education Providers. They set some broad goals to encourage measurable improvement over time and provide a benchmark against which progress can be assessed and reported.

Principles

1. The focus of credit transfer and articulation arrangements from VET to Higher Education is to establish the equivalence of learning outcomes, and to assist these equivalence decisions to be reached, regardless of the similarity or differences of the education processes involved (including processes of delivery, teaching methodology and assessment); whether the provider is a Registered Training Organisation or an accredited Higher Education provider; or of entry levels to previous qualifications (for example, eg Diploma from year 12 entry versus Diploma from Cert IV).

2. All individual institutions and providers should include formal vertical and lateral pathways for credit and articulation, both in the design of new courses and programs of study and when upgrading existing courses and programs of study, and that these pathways should be widely publicised to existing students and potential applicants.

3. Decisions to grant applications of credit or articulation between the VET and the higher education sector should have general applicability for all eligible students, but may not guarantee automatic admission to specific courses or programs of study where demand exceeds the numbers of student places available.

4. Rules, Regulations and any Register of Precedents which inform, influence or govern decisions taken in respect to the granting of credit or advanced standing should be transparent and publicly available to intending students prior to submissions of enrolment and include applications for credit in an easily accessed format. This should include transparent information related to fees where they are charged.
5. Arrangements for articulation and credit transfer, when applied, should not unfairly advantage or disadvantage either the students entering courses and programs of study with credit transfer or articulation or those students who enter directly.

6. Arrangements for credit transfer and articulation should take account of existing and continuing arrangements and procedures which support improved credit and articulation agreements from VET to Higher Education at industry-wide, State-wide, regional or institutional levels.

7. Institutions should employ agreed measures to evaluate the effectiveness of their credit transfer and articulation arrangements in improving over time the mobility of students from VET to Higher Education.

8. Individual institutions and providers are expected to demonstrate through their regular internal and external quality audits that their policies and practices for all types of credit transfer and articulation support these agreed principles.