

Recognition of Non-formal and Informal Prior Learning

Non-formal learning refers to various structured learning which do not have a course syllabus or certification associated with it such as program developed by organization, non-credit adult education courses, professional conference styled seminars, and continuing professional development. Informal learning refers to knowledge, skills, competencies learned at the work place in a non-structured mode.

The following policy and procedures set a framework for recognition of non-formal, and informal prior learning of prospective students and awarding credits when eligible. Transfer credits for formal prior education is governed by a separate policy (Transfer Admissions, Transfer Credits, and Advanced Standing).

Policy

This policy establishes a process that authenticates skills, knowledge and competencies gained through non-formal and informal learning as defined above. The principles of this policy are:

1. Approval of non-formal and informal prior learning credits necessarily occurs prior to the student's enrolment in the program. In this case, rigor evidence-based and transparent assessments are applied.
2. For an applicant to obtain credits, the applicant's knowledge, skills, experiences, and competencies will be weighed against course descriptions and related learning outcomes. The credits are only awarded when there is sufficient evidence that students have achieved all learning outcomes of the course.
3. The process provides students with guidelines and support to assemble sufficient evidence in the form of a portfolio and complete their applications. It is consistently applied to all students and across all programs, disciplines, units, courses, and competencies.
4. AMUD only recognizes non-formal and informal prior learning that is current, course relevant, and sufficiently covers the breadth and depth of knowledge that can match with university-level learning.
5. To grant credits AMUD will conduct a challenge exam to assess the achievement of learning outcomes of the relevant course.
6. For every course that has been successfully recognized against non-formal and informal prior learning experience, a grade of 'TR' shall appear on the transcript. This grade will not be used in the calculation of cumulative grade point average (CGPA).
7. No more than 50% of the credit for all courses in an individual undergraduate program may be awarded through this process including credit transfer, and not more than 25% for graduate programs.
8. In no case this policy and related procedures substitute for admission requirements.

Procedures

1. An applicant shall complete the non-formal/informal application stating the non-formal/informal credits that he/she wishes to be considered for recognition
2. The complete application form, along with all supporting documents and related evidence and the processing fee, will be submitted to Admissions. Evidence may include authenticated certificates of informal learning, projects, and specific portfolios, but in all cases of informal and non-formal learning, the student has to appear and pass a challenge exam for each course he/she is requesting a credit recognition for.
3. Admissions, in consultation with the relevant Dean, shall assign an academic advisor to assist the applicant in terms of assessment process, the kind of evidence that can be used, the

- administrative course of actions including the possibility to appeal a decision, an outline of the learning or competency outcomes against which students will be assessed, and the forms that can be presented to make the application successful along with the related timeline.
4. Admissions shall forward the student application and supporting documents to the Registrar's office. The Registrar office is responsible for making sure that the submitted documents are satisfactory. Upon confirmation, the Registrar Office will forward the complete file to the Dean of the relevant school who will establish an ad-hoc committee chaired by the particular Program Leader to assess and recommend or reject credit recognition. Partial recognition is not allowed.
 5. The ad-hoc Committee shall complete an Assessment Evaluation form and submit it to the Dean of the relevant School. This form will list all the courses for which the credit recognition has been granted along with a separate list of courses for which no credit recognition was awarded. The ad-hoc committee may also ask the applicant to submit further documentation and/or evidence.
 6. The Dean will check the assessment form submitted by the ad-hoc Committee and ask for further clarifications, in particular, those related to the recommendations of the Committee and the rationale behind its decisions before approval.
 7. The approved file including assessment form shall be submitted by the Dean to the Registrar Office who will present the applicant's case to the Vice President of Academics for final approval.
 8. The decision will then be communicated by the Vice-President Academics Office to Admissions who will forward it to the concerned applicant. If an applicant is not satisfied with the decision, he/she can file an appeal with Admissions within two weeks of receiving the decision.
 9. In this line, an Appeal Form including the following main details is filled out by the applicant (annexed to this policy):
 - Contact details of the applicant
 - Appeal information including the rational for the appeal and additional supporting documents that he/she wishes to be considered
 - Student declaration that the submitted documents are accurate and authentic.
 - Student declaration that they are aware that they can only appeal once with respect to specific credit recognition.
 10. Upon receiving the dated appeal, an ad-hoc Appeal Committee shall be established by the Vice-President Academics and Chaired by the Registrar to look at the applicant's appeal and provide its recommendation to the Vice-President Academics within one week of the start of its mandate. The Vice-President Academics will act on the recommendation and render the final decision. This decision is forwarded to Admissions and shall be immediately communicated to the applicant within two days of receipt from the Vice-President Academics Office. The decision is final and cannot be appealed again.

Assessment of Non-Formal and Informal Prior Learning

AMUD will use one or a combination of the following assessment modes in conducting this exercise:

1. Comparable examinations or tests that were used to assess the achievement of learning outcomes or qualifications in its programs, modules, and courses.
2. Review of the portfolio of evidence which includes documents such as certificates (attendance, completion, achievement, etc.), and/or official job descriptions or statement of duties and responsibilities, letters of reference from employers detailing applicant's relevant skills and experience, and samples of work performed
3. Onsite observation of applicant's relevant skill and/or competence under assessment.
4. Assessment of reflective papers, journal articles, or similar documents authored by the applicant that can strengthen his/her file.

Assessment Processes

AMUD has an established assessment process that includes but not limited to the following elements:

1. A list of undergraduate and graduate courses for which credit recognition may be awarded;
2. A list of the learning outcomes for each course or qualification;
3. For each course, the qualifications, and experience required of the individual or individuals performing the assessments; currently, the general attributes include a minimum of five years of industry experience, an earned doctoral degree, and three years of academic experience at a recognized institution of higher education.
4. A comprehensive and detailed list of the types of evidence that may be submitted with the application (already discussed in this policy under assessment of non-formal and informal prior learning).

Recognition of Nonformal and Informal Prior Learning Policy has been submitted to and approved by the CAA and complies with Annex 20 of CAA Standards.