

What is 'cross-institutional' study?

Cross-institutional study describes where a student undertakes study at a host provider (other than their home provider) with the home provider's permission and agreement that study undertaken with the host provider will be credited back to their course at their home provider.

While the student will study with two or more providers, the student will only be issued with ONE qualification/award – that is the course undertaken with the home institution and for which the visa was issued.

Cross-institutional study occurs as an exception to the general study pattern, and where all providers involved are able to offer their courses independently of each other. (Where a provider relies upon another provider to run part of the course, this is an 'arrangement', NOT cross-institutional study.)

Must both providers be CRICOS registered?

Yes.

What does the home provider need to know about the host provider's course before approving cross-institutional study for a student?

Before approving cross-institutional study for a student, the home provider will need to make an assessment of equivalence and quality of the unit/module offered by the host provider. The host provider's course will need to be of the same or higher level than the home provider's course.

Can a student undertake cross-institutional study with a provider in a different state or territory from the home provider?

Yes. Cross-institutional study can be undertaken across state/territory boundaries as long as both providers are CRICOS registered in their home state/territory to deliver the course, and both providers agree to the study.

Can a student undertake cross-institutional study over the summer period?

Under the National Code 2007 cross-institutional study will be able to be undertaken in **any** study period (ie. compulsory or non-compulsory study periods).

What happens if the student wants to study a few units with another provider and to have these credited back to their home course, but the home provider does not agree?

For a student to be undertaking 'cross-institutional study', both the home and host provider must agree to allow study to occur and the home provider must approve the student's choice of unit/s as being suited to the granting of course credit.

If the home provider does not agree to allow the proposed study with the other provider, the student may still study with the other provider but that study will not automatically be credited back to the home course.

If a student is studying a course with a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) and wants to study part of the course with another RTO, does the home provider have to agree to this?

Under the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) 2007, it is a condition of registration that the RTO must recognise the AQF qualifications and statements of attainment issued by any other RTO.

Essentially, under the AQTF an RTO must allow credit transfer for units of competence awarded by another

RTO. However, there is no expectation that any RTO must issue **for free** a qualification to someone who turns up with a suitable package of units. For example, if RTO A had enrolled a student after assessing a student's RPL and agreed with the student on a price for the course on that basis, RTO A could tell the student that regardless of extra units studied elsewhere while enrolled with RTO A, the original price for the course still applied. This would not preclude the RTO from recognising the study undertaken with another RTO while enrolled with RTO A.

What are the obligations and responsibilities of providers if providers allow cross-institutional study?

The home provider must:

- meet the requirements of Standard 12 (Course credit); and
- document the details of the cross-institutional study it has approved for the student (and keep a copy of this in the student's file).

The host provider must:

- issue a CoE to cover the period of cross-institutional study. The CoE should be issued for the CRICOS registered course in which the unit/module would normally be offered; and
- note in the 'Comments' field of the CoE that the student is enrolled in cross-institutional studies.

Both providers:

- may collect course fees on their own behalf;
- are subject to the refund provisions of the ESOS Act and both providers will supply services to meet standards 6, 8 and 14;
- must monitor course progress in accordance with Standard 10 (Monitoring course progress). The provider will need to include reference to cross-institutional study in its course progress policies, for example: "Where a student is granted permission to study cross-institutionally, the student will not be reported for unsatisfactory course progress until the other provider has been consulted and the student's performance with that provider has been taken into consideration."; and
- must, where applicable, monitor attendance in accordance with Standard 11 (Monitoring attendance). The provider will need to include reference to cross-institutional study in its attendance policies and procedures, for example: "Where a student is granted permission to study cross-institutionally, the student will not be reported for unsatisfactory attendance until the other provider has been consulted and the student's attendance with that provider has been taken into consideration."