

RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING (RPL) POLICY

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1. PRINCIPLE

The Institute admission processes include explicit recognition of a student's completed prior learning. This is known in higher education as Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL). There are significant advantages in acknowledging prior learning, including a more tailored and relevant course of study, elimination of duplication of learning, enabling diversity and facilitation of credit transfers between educational institutions.

The Institute's RPL Policy complies with the requirements of the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA), the Higher Education Standards Framework (2021) and the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) (2013).

The Institute's RPL Policy strives to be equitable and evidence-driven and it provides transparent principles and processes for determining an appropriate amount of RPL credit for each student.

2. SCOPE

This Policy applies to all undergraduate and postgraduate courses offered by the Institute, inclusive of those both within Australia and offshore. The policy governs all articulation arrangements. It focuses on the credit that can potentially be given for RPL and procedures used to evidence prior learning.

3. DEFINITIONS

Advanced standing - is a form of credit for any previous learning.

Articulation - enables students to progress from a completed qualification to another with admission and/or credit in a defined qualification pathway.

Articulation agreement - is an agreement between the Institute and another institution to document and publicise a specifically approved pathway for progression between a course at the other institution and an Institute course, involving specific credit arrangements.

Block Credit - is granted towards whole stages or components of a course of learning leading to a qualification. For example, when a sequence of units undertaken at another institution is deemed sufficiently equivalent to the content and learning outcomes of a sequence of units at the Institute, block credit may be granted.

Credit – is the value assigned for the recognition of equivalence in content and learning outcomes between

different types of learning and/or qualification. Credit reduces the amount of learning required to achieve a qualification and may be recognised through credit transfer, articulation, recognition of prior learning or advanced standing.

Credit transfer -- is a process that provides students with agreed and consistent credit outcomes for components of a qualification based on identified equivalence in content and learning outcomes between matched qualifications.

Formal Learning – is the learning that takes place through a structured program of learning that leads to the full or partial achievement of an officially accredited qualification.

Informal Learning - is learning gained through work, social, family, hobby or leisure activities and experiences. Unlike formal or non-formal learning, informal learning is not organised or externally structured in terms of objectives, time or learning support. See also formal and non-formal learning.

Learning Outcomes – are the expression of the set of knowledge, skills and the application of the knowledge and skills a person has acquired and is able to demonstrate as a result of learning.

Nested Course – is a course of study leading to a higher education award that includes articulation arrangements from a lower level education award into a higher level education award in the same discipline to enable multiple entry and exit points. The articulation may relate to previous studies at the Institute or at other recognised educational institutions.

Non-formal Learning – is learning that takes place through a structured program of learning but does not lead to an officially accredited qualification (e.g. workplace or community-based training activities).

Recognition Prior Learning – is a process that involves assessment of an individual's relevant prior learning (including formal, informal and non-formal learning) to determine the credit outcomes of an individual application for credit. Prior Learning includes relevant learning that has taken place prior to admission to a course, as well as learning that occurs while enrolled in course, for example, when a student undertakes cross-institutional studies.

Specified credit - is granted for one or more specific units exempting students from those units and awarding the appropriate credit points in their place. It may be granted where the student has met the learning outcomes, attained the knowledge and/or developed the skills related to the specific units.

Unspecified credit - is granted in the form of credit points which take the place of elective units in a course. Unspecified credit may be granted where prior learning is judged to be relevant to the learning outcomes of a course but cannot be specifically related to an individual unit.

4. PRINCIPLES FOR GRANTING CREDIT

- 4.1** The Institute has an equitable, evidence driven and transparent process for determining an appropriate amount of RPL credit for each student.
- 4.2** Details of RPL credit are provided to prospective students prior to enrolment.
- 4.3** Consistent with the process, RPL will be evaluated on a case - by - case basis on the merits of the case put forward by the student.
- 4.4** Educational judgments concerning equivalence of learning outcomes are based on the discipline context, content, standards and assessment in the program or course the applicant has undertaken. Key considerations for decisions are that the integrity of the Institute's courses and qualifications are upheld and that students have the ability to complete courses with no disadvantage in achieving expected learning outcomes or qualifications.
- 4.5** Specified credit for RPL may be granted on successful completion of the prior learning in relevant disciplines to achieve learning outcomes that are substantially equivalent to the Institute's relevant unit(s) or nested course(s).

- 4.6 Unspecified credit or block credit may be granted where prior learning is regarded as consistent with the broad learning outcomes of units or the course being undertaken. The unspecified credit will be restricted to non-core components of a course.
- 4.7 The maximum credit granted in recognition of prior learning achieved in an **incomplete course** is 50 per cent of the total credit points of the Institute course.
- 4.8 The maximum credit granted in recognition of prior learning achieved in a **completed course**, which does not substantially match any nested course, is 50 per cent of the total credit points of the Institute course.
- 4.9 Where a completed course substantially matches an Institute's course that is an equivalent course, credit granted in recognition of prior learning achieved shall be the full credit point value of the Institute's equivalent course.
- 4.10 AQF level 5 and 6 awards will be recognised as such without distinguishing whether they are obtained from a university, an independent higher education provider, or a VET provider.
- 4.11 Prior learning that has been completed within the last ten years will generally be considered current learning for the purpose of assessing RPL.
- 4.12 Each assessment of RPL will be made taking into consideration the requirements of any relevant professional body, statutory body or licensing authority that has accredited an Institute's course.
- 4.13 Exceptions to clause 4.11 may be approved in individual cases by the Dean or his/her nominee of the relevant School, and may necessarily include, but not be limited to, reference to requirements specified in clause 4.12.
- 4.14 All RPL applications shall close by the census date of the first teaching period with respect to any application for granting of credit in a course. Extension may be approved in individual cases.
- 4.15 Students will be formally notified in writing of the outcome of their RPL application within three weeks of formally lodging the application.
- 4.16 Recognised prior learning for units completed at an accredited institution will be applied after advanced standing has been given for units completed in the applicable Institute's course on a non-award basis. The limits to advanced standing imposed by clauses 4.4 and 4.5 apply to recognised prior learning and do not include units in a course completed at the Institute on a non-award basis.
- 4.17 If a student enrolls in a unit for which specified credit has previously been awarded, the student will be deemed to have voluntarily waived credit for that unit. If a student fails a unit for which specified credit had previously been awarded, the student may not subsequently rely on specified credit which has been waived.

5. PROCEDURES FOR GRANTING CREDIT

- 5.1 The assessment of prior learning is based on an evaluation of the evidence presented, using the following criteria:

Validity --- the prior learning matches both the qualification type and AQF level of the discipline learning outcomes for the relevant course. The applicant's standard of achievement in the prior learning is consistent with the qualification AQF level and type specified for the course.

Authenticity – the prior learning has been undertaken by the applicant and the standard of achievement in the prior learning is based on the applicant's own work.

Currency – the prior learning has been achieved within the specified time limit for credit.

Volume --- the evidence of prior learning is sufficient to reliably verify the learning outcomes achieved are at the appropriate standard. In recognising prior learning consideration needs to be given to whether the volume of learning is sufficient in the context of the discipline for the AQF level and qualification type, as well as whether there is a sufficient portion of qualification components at the AQF level.

5.2 Prospective students who wish to apply for RPL must indicate this intent on the Student Application Form, and also complete the *Recognition of Prior Learning Form*. These forms must be completed in full and then be submitted to the Admissions Office with the following supporting documents:

- A certified copy of the academic transcript or completion letter or equivalent. While students may submit electronic copies of supporting documents to facilitate enrolment, credit for RPL cannot be granted without sighting original documents or certified copies.
- A detailed, official unit outline for each unit in which credit is sought. The outline must show the:
 - unit details (institution details, unit name and number);
 - semester/year of study;
 - contact hours per week;
 - expected learning outcomes
 - coverage of the unit, topics discussed each week;
 - assessment structure; and
 - reference and reading materials including textbooks.

Note: a unit outline is not required for an RPL application for a unit of the same name at the same AQF level if the unit is accredited by a professional body or a statutory body as meeting that professional body's required learning outcomes.

5.3 Where an applicant seeks credit for prior learning for a course or unit completed at the Institute to meet the requirements of Institute's another course, the Admissions Office may process the application without the supporting documents specified in 5.2.

5.4 Where considered necessary, an interview conducted by the relevant Dean of School or a delegate will be held with the student to clarify aspects of prior learning.

5.5 Supporting documents and evidence of studies taken overseas in a language other than English must be accompanied by a translation from a National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI) qualified person or agency. Such person or agency must be accredited to at least 'translator' status. All translated documents must display the official NAATI stamp. This requirement applies to applicants at offshore campuses, including those where courses are delivered in a language other than English, as well as for those within Australia.

5.6 The Admissions Office shall preliminarily assess all RPL applications to determine if applications meet the stated requirements before submitting them to the Academic Assessor who is delegated by the Dean of School to give final approval. The Academic Assessor will be a senior academic staff member with discipline specific knowledge to enable them to make an informed decision.

5.7 Prospective students shall be informed of the results of their RPL applications in the Offer Letter and where necessary fees adjusted accordingly. Students will also be notified in writing of the outcome of their RPL application within three weeks of formally lodging the application. Any conditions of the RPL approval shall be stated in the Offer Letter. In the case of international students, a Confirmation of Enrolment shall be issued subject to the consideration and approval of any RPL application.

5.8 Any credit granted for RPL shall be recorded in the student data system as part of the applicant's study progression. Records of Results documentation will show credit granted through RPL.

5.9 Where an error has been made in assessing an application, or where the documentation provided by the applicant is incomplete, misleading, false or invalid, the Institute reserves the right to withdraw credit.

6. QUALITY ASSURANCE

The Institute will confirm that RPL credit remains valid and appropriate for the Institute's units and courses by assuring the following occurs:

- assessment of RPL is evidence based and occurs on a transparent basis;

- assessment of RPL confirms that the learning outcomes have been met prior to enrolment at the Institute;
- when a significant proportion of students is admitted to a course with credit and RPL, the progress of those students is tracked to ensure that their progress is satisfactory and at least comparable to other students enrolled in the course;
- where a student is admitted to a course with credit and RPL, the orientation process they receive reflects their admission point;
- credit awarded by another institution on the basis of RPL is not transferable to the Institute;
- credit will not be granted for prior formal and non-formal learning in units for which an individual received an outcome other than competent or satisfied requirements, or a Pass Grade (or equivalent) or higher;
- grades of “conceded pass” or “terminating pass” or equivalent from another educational institution will not be deemed to be successful completion of learning outcomes for the purposes of granting credit at the Institute;
- credit granted for prior learning is not used for the purposes of consideration of a student’s progress or prizes, scholarships and awards.
- to ensure consistency in practices and implementation of this Policy, the assessment of RPL and credit decisions are monitored and reviewed annually by the Teaching and Learning Committee of Academic Board and reported to Academic Board;
- The Institute’s RPL arrangements and any standing credit transfer arrangements with other providers will be publicly available.

7. APPEALS

Where an application for RPL is refused in whole or in part, a student may appeal for a review of the application under the Student Selection and Admissions Policy.

All students, including prospective students, are provided with access to the Institute’s appeal and grievance resolution mechanisms. If a student wishes to appeal, the student must lodge an appeal form with the Senior Student Services Manager (Refer to *Student Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure* for further information) The appeal must be lodged within 20 working days of the receipt of notification of the RPL credit decision. The documentation must set out the grounds for the appeal.

8. RELATED DOCUMENTS

Recognition of Prior Learning Form
Student Selection and Admissions Policy and Procedures

9. Version Control

Historical Version	Approved by	Approval Date
2019.06	Academic Board	27 June 2019
2018.10	Academic Board	11 October 2018
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