Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Policy

RSY-ACAD-PY-004-v3.0 Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Policy
Document History

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| 2.0     | 2 Sep 2013     | 17 Oct 2013            | • Added Table of contents  
                              • Section 2 Added Scope of Policy  
                              • Section 3 Added Document owner and approving authority  
                              • Section 4 Revised Definition of Terms  
                              • Section 5 Amended Policy Principles for basis of recognition with reference to AQF guidelines. |
| 2.1     | 22 Oct 2013    | 23 Oct 2013            | • Removed Section 3 Document owner and approving authority, added responsible stakeholders on Title page |
| 2.2     | 13 Nov 2013    | 13 Nov 2013            | • Section 1 Amended third point to read “Outline” rather than “Outlines”  
                              • Section 4.1(a) and (b) Amended to read “this is” rather than “these are”  
                              • Section 4.2.2 should refer to para [4.2.3] for maximum credit rules, rather than [5.2.3]. |
| 3.0     | 9 Apr 2015     | 1 May 2015             | • Section 3 Updated definition of terms  
                              • Section 4 (b) to (3) Updated policy principles for AQF requirements  
                              • Sections 5 and 6.1 Removed reference to NOOSR guidelines for assessment of RPL on the basis of overseas studies  
                              • Sections 6.1 and 6.2 Added in Assessment of formal learning and informal learning  
                              • Section 6.3 Amended Components of the Course that are Recognised to Credit Transfer  
                              • Section 7 Added Reference and Related Documents |

Approved by: Academic Board on 1 May 2015

Distribution List

To: Academic Director  
   Program Directors  
   Admissions staff  
   Student Services staff  
   Associate College Directors

Cc: Chair, Senior Management Committee  
    Chair, Council
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1 PURPOSE
The aim of the RPL policy is to
- Recognise and support the legitimate interest of students in obtaining credit for prior learning;
- Ensure a consistent and equitable approach to the granting of credit for prior learning which is academically defensible and takes into account the student's ability to meet the learning outcomes of the Raffles College of Design and Commerce (RCDC) courses successfully;
- Outline the parameters for determining credit, including the maximum of level of credit that can be granted within programs; and
- Facilitate the movement of students between institutions and between programs of various types and levels.

2 SCOPE
This policy is applicable to all coursework programs of RCDC and covers the granting of credit towards a RCDC qualification.

The Academic Director will be responsible for the application of this policy and may delegate processing of precedent ed cases to administrative staff. A record of precedents will be kept within Admissions and Student Services to facilitate processing.

3 DEFINITION OF TERMS
Credit: is the value assigned for the recognition of equivalence in content and learning outcomes between different types of learning and/or qualifications which reduces the amount of learning required to achieve a qualification and may be 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 equivalences in content and learning outcomes between matched qualifications. It provides a means for students to gain credit in a RCDC qualification on the basis of completed components of another AQF qualification or other formal learning.

Recognition of prior learning (RPL): is an assessment process that involves assessment of an individual's relevant prior learning (including formal, non-formal and informal learning) to determine the credit outcomes of an individual's application for credit.

Advanced Standing: is the number of credit points awarded for any previous learning.

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

AQF qualification is the result of completing an accredited complete program of learning that leads to formal certification that a graduate has achieved learning outcomes as described in the AQF.

Exemptions: are the subjects for which the student has received credit.

Substitution: is releasing a student from undertaking a subject and specifying alternative subjects) of equivalent credit point value, which must be completed in order to achieve equivalent academic credit.

1 As defined in the Australian Qualification Framework (AQF)
4  POLICY PRINCIPLES

a) RCDC provides the opportunity for students to apply to have prior learning considered for credit towards a RCDC course and recognises prior knowledge and skills that meet course learning outcomes.

b) Decision about granting RPL are to be applied consistently with the AQF principles that pathways:
   • are clear, consistent and transparent to students
   • are systemic and systematic
   • enable flexible qualifications pathways
   • may be horizontal across AQF qualifications at the same level, as well as vertical between qualifications at different levels
   • can facilitate credit for entry into, as well as credit towards AQF qualifications, and
   • eliminate unnecessary barriers for student access to AQF qualifications.

c) Decisions about granting RPL take into account students' likelihood to successfully achieve the qualification outcomes and to ensure that the integrity of qualification outcomes is maintained.

d) In determining credit towards an RCDC course at any level, RCDC will take into account the comparability and equivalence of the learning outcomes, volume of learning, program of study including content, and learning and assessment approaches.

5  ADMINISTRATION OF RPL POLICY

a) Applications for RPL will normally only be considered before or at the time of admission. Where this is not possible, or where circumstances change, a second or later application will be considered only prior to final re-enrolment in the RCDC award course for which RPL is being sought. A second or later application for RPL must be made in writing to the Academic Director, must make full disclosure of the initial application and must set out the circumstances which prevented an initial application or the changed circumstances which justify a second application.

b) Clause 5(a) does not preclude a student's right at any time to cancel exemptions or substitutions that have been granted previously. It should be noted that cancellation of exemptions or substitutions often has fee implications for students.

c) Students wishing to cancel previously approved credit must do so prior to their final (re-) enrolment.

d) In determining whether credit may be granted, RCDC will assure itself of the currency of the applicant's knowledge. Applications for RPL will be considered on a course-by-course basis, where currency of learning can be demonstrated to the satisfaction of the relevant academic staff.

e) Previously acquired formal or informal learning may only be counted once as approved RPL exemptions for any course offered by RCDC.

f) Where students do not meet RCDC standards on entry requirements, any relevant applications for RPL will be rejected automatically. Where VET courses do not provide a grade or where grade criteria have not been set, applications will be directed to the Academic Board or its nominee for individual consideration.

g) The normal RCDC procedures should be followed for students appealing against unsuccessful applications for RPL, or disrupting any decisions made in respect of approved credit.

h) The onus of proof is on the applicant to provide the relevant documentary evidence to substantiate the appropriate RPL forms.

i) It should be noted that eligibility for RPL does not automatically guarantee an applicant a place in the course for which recognition of prior learning is offered. If RPL is granted, then in awarding advanced
standing no account will be taken of the level of performance, but the amount of advanced standing will depend on the appropriateness of the previous subjects and the English language skills of the applicant.

6 ASSESSMENT OF RPL

The RPL assessments are undertaken by Academic staff with knowledge in the subject and course content or skills area, and should recognise learning regardless of how, when and where it was acquired, provided learning is relevant to the learning outcomes in the course and current.

RCDC recognises both formal and informal types of prior learning for the purpose of establishing credit or advanced standing into RCDC courses.

6.1 FORMAL LEARNING

This is learning that takes place through a structured program of learning that leads to the full or partial achievement of an officially accredited qualification. This includes learning from:

- Completed tertiary education subjects and courses
- Completed VET subjects and courses
- Overseas qualification from recognised higher education institution.

6.1.1 ASSESSMENT OF FORMAL LEARNING

a) In assessing an applicant's prior formal learning, RCDC will undertake an objective assessment of each student's application for RPL to determine the extent to which his/her previous learning is equivalent.

b) Applicants for RPL on the basis of formal learning, where advance standing is sought on the basis of a prior qualification, should submit a certified copy of testamur, academic transcript or statement of satisfactory completion of comparable or relevant subjects offered by a professional body, registered training organisations, or other provider recognised by the College.

c) RCDC may assess the RPL based on a range of ways for students to demonstrate they have met the required outcomes for consideration of credit exemption, but generally include mapping of learning outcomes from prior formal learning to the relevant subjects and learning outcomes in the RCDC courses and making a judgement about the credit to be assigned between mapped components of two qualifications (refer to Section 6.3 on the types of credit outcomes).

6.2 INFORMAL LEARNING

This is learning that takes place either through a structured program of learning but does not lead to an officially accredited qualification or through work and other experiences. This includes learning from:

- Work experience which can be tested by a challenge assessment, or
- Courses taken outside the tertiary education systems.

6.2.1 ASSESSMENT OF INFORMAL LEARNING

a) Applicants for RPL on the basis of informal prior learning should submit details of the un-credentialed learning, and may be required to demonstrate their learning through the completion of some type of assessment or activity such as testing or compiling a portfolio of learning and/or experience.

b) RCDC may assess the RPL taking into consideration students' portfolio, project materials and/or other documentations such as reports, testimonials or other products prepared by the student that relate to the learning outcomes of the relevant RCDC course component.
6.3 **Credit Transfer**

6.3.1 Credit transfer is a common process in RCDC for assessing RPL and provide a means for students to gain credit in RCDC courses on the basis of their completed components of another AQF qualification or other formal learning.

6.3.2 The process generally includes mapping, comparing and evaluating the learning outcomes, course content and assessment requirements of the individual components of the student's prior studies, and assessing them against RCDC's course learning outcomes, course content and assessment requirements for equivalence. Credit can be given to students in the form of specified, unspecified or block credit.

   a) **Specified credit** - is credit granted towards particular or specific components of a qualification or program of learning and is equivalent to a subject exemption. Credit is granted where there is one-to-one, equivalent-level correspondence between the applicant's prior learning (credentialed or un-credentialed) and RCDC subject outcomes. Only credit for full subjects can be granted, up to the limit allowable for the course.

   b) **Unspecified credit** - is credit granted towards elective components of a qualification or program of learning and is granted where the prior learning (credentialed or un-credentialed) of the applicant is judged to be relevant to the course at the appropriate level but may not directly correspond to specific subjects within the course.

   c) **Block credit** - is credit granted towards whole stages or components of a program of learning leading to a qualification, and is granted under pre-determined arrangements for study at TAFE or other tertiary providers. Block credit normally refers to the exemption from a period of study, usually expressed in credit points, as recognition of successfully completed periods of equivalent study. Block credit can consist of either specified or unspecified credit, or a combination of both.

6.3.3 Given that unspecified credit in other institutions is often granted against unspecified electives within the course, the granting of unspecified electives within RCDC higher education courses will give appropriate recognition of the attainment of generic skills.

6.3.4 Regardless of the nature or amount of recognition granted, any specific requirements of an award must be fulfilled, including any conditions associated with the professional recognition of the award.

6.3.4 Credit transfer may be provided to students on an individual basis or may apply to groups of students, which is generally the case when a credit transfer agreement is in place between RCDC and another education provider.

6.3.5 Additional credit may be awarded as a result of further individual student negotiations taking into consideration relevant official evidence as referred to under Section 6.1.1.

6.4 **Maximum Level of Credit**

6.4.1 Credit agreements negotiated between RCDC and other institutions for students towards higher level of AQF qualifications in the same or related discipline, having taken into account the comparability and equivalence of learning outcomes, volume of learning, program of study and content, and learning and assessment approaches, should use the following as the basis of negotiations:

   - 33% credit for an Australian Diploma linked to a 3-year Bachelor Degree
   - 50% credit for an Australian Advanced Diploma or Associate Degree linked to a 3-year Bachelor Degree

6.4.2 These agreements do not preclude any further institutional or individual student negotiations for further additional credit with the proviso that the maximum credit transfer limits specified in clause 4.2.3 shall not be exceeded.

6.4.3 No student will receive credit totals more than:

   - two-thirds of a course of three years or less full-time duration, or
   - three-fourths of a course of more than three years full-time duration.
7 REFERENCES AND RELATED DOCUMENTS

Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) Qualifications Pathway Policy
RCDC Admission Policy
RCDC Articulation & Credit Transfer Agreement Procedure