



Cairnmillar  
INSTITUTE

Treatment | Education | Research

# Advanced Standing and Recognition of Prior Learning Policy

<b>Policy Name</b>	Advanced Standing and Recognition of Prior Learning Policy
<b>Policy number</b>	TLP005
<b>Date approved</b>	12 July 2017
<b>Approving body</b>	Academic Board
<b>Responsible officer</b>	Head of School
<b>Implementation officer</b>	Academic Registrar Course and Program Coordinators
<b>Next review date</b>	June 2019
<b>Linked policies</b>	TLP002 Assessment Policy
<b>Linked forms</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• APAC Accredited Credit Transfer Form</li> <li>• Standard RPL Application Cover Form</li> <li>• Partial RPL for Single Assessment Form (TBD)</li> </ul>

## Purpose of this policy

Applicants from other recognised institutes or with relevant work or life experience may be admitted into the Cairnmillar Institute (the Institute) courses with exemptions through the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) process.

The Institute takes a positive approach to granting RPL and aims to do so wherever possible in accordance with this policy and current academic and education standards.

## Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and course credit can be granted for:

- One or more whole units of study or modules within a course,
- For no more than 50% of the credit points in any one program or course of study, and/or
- For partial units of study for one or more whole assessment items within the unit (with special approval from the Course or Program Coordinator)

## Internal Credit Transfer

Where units between Cairnmillar courses are equivalent to each other an articulation agreement or equivalency document will normally be developed by the course team/s. Unit equivalency records will normally be held in the Student Management System by the Registrar.

### **Incomplete Cairnmillar Course or Program**

Where a student is undertaking, or has partially undertaken, a course of study at Cairnmillar within the last 5 years, but has not yet completed the program nor had the degree conferred, they may sometimes apply to transfer to another course and, if granted, they can transfer the equivalent enrolments and results from the incomplete course into the new program. There is no limitation on such a transfer, and where allowed by course rules, a student can convert 100% of enrolments to a new course of study.

### **Graduated Cairnmillar Course or Program**

Where a student has completed a course at Cairnmillar and had a qualification conferred the standard rules for RPL will apply, including the 50% limitation, although the only evidence required to cross-credit equivalent units will be the Cairnmillar transcript.

## Currency Limitations

Credit will not normally be available for studies, learning or experience which were completed more than 4 years prior to the application.

Credit cannot be granted for studies, learning or experience which are were completed more than 10 years prior to the application.

The currency rules may be varied in exceptional circumstances with the approval of the Head of School.

## RPL for Psychology Students - APAC Requirements

RPL and Credit Transfer applications for students in APAC accredited courses will be conducted in accordance with all relevant APAC rules and guidelines.

This means that RPL for non-APAC accredited study is not normally possible for APAC accredited except in the instance of overseas qualifications.

Limitations for credit and RPL in APAC accredited courses include, but may not be limited to:

- Students may only be given credit for any coursework from an accredited APAC course. And is strictly equivalent to coursework in the current course;
- Students may only be given credit for a placement completed as part of current employments if:
  - It is of direct relevance to the course
  - If the work would ordinarily be done by a qualified psychologist
  - Is supervision is arranged and equivalent to the usual placement supervision
- Students cannot be given credit for previous employment experience prior to entry to the course.
- Current employment cannot be used as a placement experience in the Master of Professional Psychology or the first year of the Master of Professional Psychology Practice.
- Students cannot be given any credit for any previous research experience.

## **Additional Credit Limitations for APAC Accredited Fourth-year programs**

The following additional rules apply for credit transfer in the Graduate Diploma of Psychology (4<sup>th</sup> year) and any other APAC accredited fourth-year courses offered at the Institute:

- Students transferring from one AOU to another in Australia in order to undertake a fourth-year course in psychology can only be granted recognition for studies in psychology completed if the AOU(s) at which they completed the previous three years is(are) APAC accredited and the completed units were part of an APAC accredited sequence.
- Credit for any previous studies at the 4th year or higher level and undertaken within Australia, cannot be awarded toward an APAC accredited fourth year unless the units in question were part of an APAC accredited sequence.
- Apart from exceptional circumstances, students must not be able to transfer from one Institution or AOU to another during the fourth year of a program and must complete their fourth year at one AOU.
- In exceptional circumstances, credit may be granted for the thesis or research project units in the Graduate Diploma of Psychology (4<sup>th</sup> year) and any other APAC accredited fourth-year course only, if:
  - The previous thesis or research project has been completed as part of an APAC accredited fourth-year sequence.

## **RPL for Overseas study in APAC Accredited Courses**

APAC standards state:

*Studies undertaken at non-Australian institutions must be carefully evaluated by the Institute to determine their strict equivalence to the studies for which credit is to be granted, and the Institute must be prepared to defend its decisions regarding the granting of credit must APAC conduct an audit of the Institute's transfer credit practices. (APAC Accreditation Standards 2010 p.43)*

- In the case of overseas studies in psychology a full RPL application can be made in accordance with this policy.
- Normally the original course will have already been assessed by the APS to be equivalent to the level of the course in which credit is applied for. The APS assessment should be provided as part of the portfolio of evidence for RPL.

## **RPL for Placements and Workplace Integrated Learning**

With approval from the Head of School, RPL can be granted for placement and work integrated learning and placement units but only where the following conditions are met:

- The RPL is in accordance with all relevant legislation, accreditation and standards for the course of study in which it is requested (e.g. APAC rules allow for placement RPL in the course in question)
- Is not precluded by published course rules
- Would not contravene any standards which apply to students undertaking placement in the normal manner (e.g. placement credit cannot be granted for prior paid work if the course rules preclude students from undertaking placement at a current paid work location)

## RPL for VET Students

RPL assessment for VET units or assessments must:

- Comply with the assessment requirements of the relevant training package or VET accredited course
- With approval of the Head of School, the 50% of course as RPL limitation may be waived for some VET students.

The RTO Standards (2015) definition of RPL will apply, including allowance for the assessment of informal learning:

**Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)** means an assessment process that assesses the competency/s of an individual that may have been acquired through formal, non-formal and informal learning to determine the extent to which that individual meets the requirements specified in the training package or VET accredited courses.

a) formal learning refers to learning that takes place through a structured program of instruction and is linked to the attainment of an AQF qualification or statement of attainment (for example, a certificate, diploma or university degree);

b) non-formal learning refers to learning that takes place through a structured program of instruction, but does not lead to the attainment of an AQF qualification or statement of attainment (for example, in-house professional development programs conducted by a business); and

c) informal learning refers to learning that results through experience of work-related, social, family, hobby or leisure activities (for example the acquisition of interpersonal skills developed through several years as a sales representative). (RTO Standards Legislation 2015)

## RPL for International Students

The Institute as an approved provider of higher education to overseas students has additional obligations in relation to applications for RPL from overseas students consistent with National Code Items 32 and 33:

- 32** *If the registered provider grants an overseas student RPL which leads to a shortening of the student's course, the provider must do one of the following:*
- 32.1** *If the RPL is granted before the visa grant, the registered provider must indicate the actual net course duration (as reduced by RPL) in the eCoE issued for that student for that course.*
- 32.2** *If the RPL is granted before the visa grant, the registered provider must report the change of course duration via PRISMS under s19 of the ESOS Act 2000. In such cases the provider must remind the student that it is a condition of their visa that they be enrolled in the full-time study. If they finish their course early, the student must either enroll in another CRICOS registered course or depart Australia immediately unless they have been given authorisation by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship to remain in Australia.*
- 33** *If the registered provider grants an overseas student RPL which leads to a reduced study load, i.e., contact hours per week, the provider must not allow the student to study less than a full-time load as defined in paragraph 13.1 and 13.2.*

The Institute may therefore, allow pre-offer RPL applications for international students on request. This will allow students to accurately understand the genuine expected duration of their course when an offer is made.

Where a student has overseas qualifications, but is applying as a domestic student a pre-offer application will not normally be allowed.

## Application Process

Students interested in obtaining RPL must first contact a relevant Course or Program Coordinator to discuss the RPL process.

Students or applicants who have been given approval to apply for RPL must then lodge the relevant Application for Exemption/RPL form with the Academic Registrar as per published procedures, listing the unit(s) for which recognition of prior learning is sought. Their application must also include a portfolio of evidence, as detailed below.

While general advice may sometimes be given, applications for RPL will not normally be accepted prior to an offer of admission being made for the course or program in which RPL is sought.

## Time of Application

Applications for whole unit RPL must be lodged before the start of teaching for the first teaching period of enrolment in the course or program for which credit is being requested.

Where a later application is allowed, this must be at least fifteen (15) days prior to the census date of any unit in which RPL is requested, to allow for an outcome before the census date.

Applications for RPL or credit will not normally be accepted prior to an offer of admission into a course or program being accepted.

### Early RPL Application for International Students

- An exception to the pre-application rule may be made for international applicants who want to know if their RPL will be accepted before formally accepting an offer and to allow for an accurate International Student Offer and eCOE which reflect the RPL which will apply
- Where an early application is allowed this will normally be before the closing date for applications for admission, and the decision will normally be made and advised at the same time as an offer of admission is made.
- All other aspects of this policy will apply and the applicant will still need to submit a full portfolio of evidence.

### Current and On-going Students

Claims for RPL made after the first teaching period of enrolment in a course, may be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Head of School, or an ad-hoc subcommittee as appropriate.

## Portfolio of Evidence

The portfolio must contain evidence of the student's prior learning experiences.

### (a) In the case of credentialed learning, applications must contain:

- A certified copy of a statement of satisfactory completion of a unit or course offered by a professional body, enterprise, private educational institution, or by any other provider recognised by a university;
- Documentation stating the objectives, learning outcomes and content of the unit or course;

- Details of the contact hours of the unit or course (timetable or other supporting documentation required);
- Details of the presenter/s, instructor/s, or teacher/s.

**(b) In the case of uncredentialed learning, applications must include:**

- Details of uncredentialed learning, a detailed curriculum vitae and a letter of support from an appropriate person/organisation who can verify these details.
- A document which outlines the link between those learning experiences and the learning outcomes of the course in which the student is seeking credit.
- Students may be required to undertake some form of test or assessment to demonstrate that they have achieved the learning outcomes stated.

## Application Fees

- An application fee of \$50 will apply for each whole unit of study in which RPL is requested, up to a maximum of \$300.
- Application fees are not normally refundable and must be paid prior to the application being considered.
- If declined, RPL fees can normally be re-credited to the standard tuition fee for the unit of study or module in which RPL was requested but cannot be refunded.
- RPL fees will normally be waived for internal credit transfer, inter-institutional credit transfer for APAC accredited units, and for Nationally Recognised VET Training which is exactly equivalent to the unit in which RPL is required.
- Fees will not apply for partial credit applications (e.g. one or more assessment items in a unit otherwise taken normally) as the assessment cost is included in tuition fees, but no discount will apply to tuition for the unit if partial RPL is granted.

## RPL Assessments

The procedure for and implementation of RPL assessment within each program is managed by the relevant Course or Program Coordinator and approved by the Head of School. This procedure will then be consistently applied by course teams when considering and assessing RPL applications within the course or courses to identify if all of the relevant learning outcomes have been met.

In reaching a decision, the Course or Program Coordinator, or delegate, will consider the following:

- Nature and amount of evidence provided by the applicant;
- Scope of subject matter covered by the application;
- Specific needs of the applicant (language, special needs, etc);
- Number of equivalent student contact hours, EFTSL or credit points involved in formal learning
- Type and comparability of assessment/s and learning outcomes for formal and informal study
- Whether unit/experience was conducted in a similar course
- Any other considerations addressed in the RPL plan assessment plan for the course

## Additional Information or Evidence

Where an RPL assessor requires additional evidence they will contact the student or applicant directly to request the evidence. The request will be in writing via email and the Registry team will be included as a cc to the request.

The student or applicant will normally have five (5) working days to supply additional evidence. Shorter time periods may be required if the census date for one or more units is closer than ten (10) working days away.

## Notification of Outcome

A decision will normally be made within ten (10) working days of all evidence being received in satisfactory condition, and if possible prior to the relevant census date.

The student will be notified in writing of what credit (if any) is to be given for his/her prior learning. In cases in which a prior learning portfolio is submitted in support of a RPL application, and that application is not granted, the Institute will furnish the student with written reasons for its decision.

The Registrar will also be informed of the decision immediately and will ensure that the formal notification is stored on the official student record.

## Appeal

A student who is dissatisfied with the decision in relation to his/her application for recognition of prior learning, may appeal this decision on one or more of the following grounds:

- (a) That a procedural irregularity has occurred
- (b) That the application was not heard on its academic merits

A student who wishes to appeal against the decision in relation to his/her application for recognition of prior learning must submit an appeal in writing to the Academic Registrar.

Appeals must be lodged with the Academic Registrar no later than five (5) working days from notification of the outcome of the application.

The written appeal must state the grounds on which the appeal is made, and must contain:

- An outline of why the student believes the original decision is inappropriate; and,
- Any additional evidence in support of the student's case (copies of relevant documents must be attached to the written appeal)

The Academic Registrar or nominee must consider the appeal by reviewing the initial decision and the student's written submission. The Academic Registrar or nominee is required to consult with any relevant lecturers and may, if further information is required, discuss the matter directly with the student.

The student must be informed of the outcome of the appeal within ten (10) working days of its lodgment as identified by the date of receipt by the Academic Registrar.

An appeal on the outcome of an RPL application is considered equivalent to a Formal Resolution under section 3 of the SSP007 Student Grievance Policy.