

# Recognition of Prior Learning Procedure

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## Definitions

(See Appendix 2)

## Purpose

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is based on the principle that it is wasteful and demotivating for the applicant and education provider to spend time and effort studying or teaching knowledge, skills or attitudes that have already been achieved.

RPL involves UCOL making a fair and valid assessment of an applicant's abilities. The assessment may result in the applicant receiving credit for some portion of a programme (or in some cases the whole programme) that leads to a qualification.

This document outlines the procedures to be used when a student/applicant applies for any category of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), including Credit Transfer (CT), Cross Credit (CC) and Assessment of Prior Learning (APL).

## Scope

This is a UCOL wide procedure.

## Procedure

1. Advise students/applicants of the availability of RPL prior to or at the time of enrolment. If, due to RPL, their enrolment falls below 80% of an equivalent full-time student, access to student loans and allowances will be affected.
2. Review the curriculum to determine whether the Academic Board has approved regulations that limit the amount of credit that may be awarded through RPL (Academic Statute Part VI 6.4.1).

**NB.** RPL may result in credit being awarded for a complete qualification where the Academic Board has deemed this appropriate.

3. Students will normally be credited the student fee component (where paid), less any administrative charges/hourly fees, for any course(s) for which they have been awarded RPL. Where Unit Standards are bundled for a course the fee refund will only apply if all Unit Standards in that course have previously been achieved.
4. A successful application for RPL may result in the student being admitted to any point of a programme with credit for course(s).
5. Every endeavour will be made to meet the following timeframes:
  - Once the full RPL application is received, including ALL relevant evidence, the evaluation should be completed *within the timeframe agreed to by the assessor and student/applicant*.
  - For students already enrolled into a programme, their RPL application must be submitted within two weeks of the start of the programme. Late applications will be considered on a case by case basis.
  - Students who have an application under consideration are expected to attend classes until the outcome of any RPL application is confirmed.
6. Credit is awarded at course level, provided there is sufficient evidence to show that the course requirements have been met, and may not be awarded twice for the same learning in the same programme.
7. Assessment of an applicant's prior learning, including recognition of current competence if applicable, must meet standards of validity, and be made by persons competent in the field being assessed. Assessors are expected to be flexible and able to adapt their assessment techniques to different situations, provide honest feedback, respect confidentiality and adhere to established academic standards. A verifiable link between the course requirements and the applicant's evidence must be established.
8. RPL may include any one or more of the following:
  - Credit Transfer
  - Cross Credit
  - Assessment of Prior Learning
9. The Faculty Board of Educational Improvement monitors the granting of credit as a result of RPL. The requirements for each of these is set out below.
10. Documentation relating to the process used to assess the evidence against the course requirements and the RPL decisions must be retained on the student's file. This will enable moderation of assessment decisions in the case of APL and ensure there is an accurate record in the case of an appeal.

#### **A. Credit Transfer**

*Use this process when a student has successfully completed course(s) at UCOL or another accredited education provider with identical programme content and course requirements.*

1. The student will complete a Recognition of Prior Learning Application Form.

2. The student will attach to the application form one of the following:
  - i. A suitably endorsed academic transcript; or
  - ii. A copy of the student's Record of Learning from NZQA.
3. The completed form and attached information is forwarded to the Programme Leader or designated RPL Co-ordinator for checking and approval sign-off. There is no fee for an internal Credit Transfer application but an administration fee is charged for an external Credit Transfer application.
4. It is the responsibility of the Programme Leader or designated RPL Co-ordinator to advise if the Credit Transfer has any impact on the student's enrolment status and/or the impact of this on the student's loans and allowances.
5. It is the responsibility of the Programme Leader or designated RPL Co-ordinator to notify the student of approved Credit Transfer.
6. A copy of all documentation pertaining to the Credit Transfer application MUST be notified to the appropriate Faculty Board of Educational Improvement to meet reporting regulations/requirements.
7. After notification to the Faculty Board of Educational Improvement the RPL application form is then forwarded to Student Information who will process the Credit Transfer, generate any credit notes and record the result on the student's record. The form and associated documentation will be put on the student's file.

**NB:** For the avoidance of doubt Credit Transfer learning has already been assessed and credit received for a specific course either from a UCOL programme or from another accredited education provider.

## **B. Cross Credit**

*Use this process when the student/applicant can produce evidence of having been awarded credit for what may be regarded as equivalent courses toward a qualification from an accredited education provider. For example, a student may have completed the first year of a degree at another provider and wishes to have this transferred to a UCOL degree. Cross credit is not normally applicable to unit standards.*

*This process involves an appropriately qualified staff member evaluating the Cross Credit application to ascertain the similarity of course requirements, and the level and the currency of the content of the course or courses completed, when compared against the curriculum of the UCOL programme. Where a match can be established then credit may be awarded. The match must be close enough to justify the award of 'full-credit', that is credit for the whole course. **Partial credit will not be awarded.***

1. The student/applicant will complete a Recognition of Prior Learning Application Form. A copy of the student's Academic Record/Transcript must be attached to the Application Form. An administration fee will apply to all applications for Cross Credit.

In situations where cross crediting arrangements have already been established for courses from outside UCOL as detailed in curriculum documents (a standard credit recognition pathway) no further charges will be incurred.

However, where staff are required to undertake a comparative analysis of the UCOL programme and the course or courses for which cross credit is sought, additional charges will be incurred.

2. The application will be forwarded to the Programme Leader/RPL Co-ordinator. Initial processing of applications will normally take place within two weeks. However, where further information from other institutions is required to enable evaluation, the student will be notified of the delay.
3. If a cross credit has been previously approved by the Faculty Board of Educational Improvement for the scope of the application, the Programme Leader/RPL Co-ordinator will check that the student's Academic Record/Transcript is consistent with the approval and if so credit will be awarded. The form will be signed and returned to Student Information who will register the cross credit. The form and associated documentation will be put on the student's file. It is the responsibility of the Programme Leader or designated RPL Co-ordinator to advise *the student/applicant* if the cross credit has any impact on the student's enrolment status and/or the potential impact of this on the student's loans and allowances.
4. When an evaluation of a Cross Credit application is undertaken the student is required to provide information from the programme documentation (of the previous credit achieved) that will allow the assessor to ascertain the course requirements achieved, the level of the course(s) and its content. After a comparative analysis has been undertaken by an appropriately qualified academic staff member, the RPL application along with supporting documented evidence will be presented to the Faculty Board of Educational Improvement. Cross Credit applications MUST be approved by the Programme Leader or designated RPL Co-ordinator prior to being presented to the appropriate Faculty Board of Educational Improvement who will either award or decline the application for Cross Credit. It is the responsibility of the Faculty Board of Educational Improvement to notify the student/*applicant* of any approved or declined cross credit.

**NB:** Credit can only be awarded at course level. Partial credit of a course will not be awarded. Additional costs may be incurred, dependant on the length of time it has taken to undertake the work required to determine the Cross Credit. It is the responsibility of the Programme Leader or designated RPL Co-ordinator to advise *the student/applicant* if the Cross Credit has any impact on the student's enrolment status and/or the impact of this on the student's loans and allowances.

5. The decision of the Faculty Board of Educational Improvement will be forwarded to Student Information who will process Cross Credits, generate any credit notes and record the outcome on the student's record. The form and associated documentation will be put on the students file.

### **C. Assessment of Prior Learning**

*This process is used when a student/applicant has potentially met some or all of the graduate outcomes of a qualification and has current competency for one or more courses and wish to be awarded credit. APL is available to anyone who can provide evidence that their relevant skills, knowledge and experience are at the required level to be credited towards a qualification.*

*To be assessed the student/applicant is required to present evidence to meet the graduate outcomes, and/or course(s) requirements. Evidence may include, but not limited to: professional portfolio, reports/written exemplars, challenge assessment, attestation by employer(s), professional conversation/interview, transcripts of work histories/experiences, etc. Applicants seeking recognition of current competence are required to present evidence that their experience is current (e.g. techniques and materials). Assessment establishes if there is sufficient valid and reliable evidence at the level of the credit being targeted.*

## **Phase 1: Student's/Applicant's Responsibility with UCOL Support**

### **1. Initial Steps**

The potential student/applicant:

- Is informed of the RPL/APL option prior to enrolment;
- Seeks advice and support, forms, etc;
- Seeks assistance and support from the Programme Leader /RPL Co-ordinator;
- Formally applies for consideration of prior learning (if s/he wishes to proceed). This includes payment of fees for administration, facilitation and assessment;
- Should apply within two weeks of start of *programme*. Late applications will be considered on a case by case basis, where the applicant is a student already enrolled in a programme.
- Applicants through UCOL Assessment of Prior Learning, may apply at any time.

### **2. Identifying Scope of APL Application**

The student/applicant:

- Reflects on their current knowledge and skills; work, leisure, education and training, parenting, community work, etc to be considered;
- Applicants through UCOL Assessment of Prior Learning will complete a self-assessment as part of application process, to identify target qualification.
- Decides the course or courses for which they wish to seek credit for prior learning or recognition of current competence;
- Looks at the course requirements of the course, courses or qualification for which credit is sought;
- Matches their prior learning (life, work, experiences, etc) against the specific course requirements of the course or courses;
- Checks on the availability of credit transfer/cross credit arrangements, where they have achieved credit elsewhere already;
- Checks they meet the requirements of recognition of current competence for a qualification at the graduate level;
- Applicants through UCOL Assessment of Prior Learning will work with the assigned facilitator to guide in the above steps.

### 3. Gathering of evidence

The student/applicant:

- In consultation with the Programme Leader/RPL Co-ordinator, decides which combination of methods they will use to provide evidence of their prior learning:
  - Challenge (examination, practical, verbal or written) assessment task(s);
  - Portfolio;
  - Assessment Interview;
  - Attestation (usually not used in isolation);
- Assembles information and evidence that supports or demonstrates their achievement of the requirements through prior learning.
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### 4. Submission

The student/applicant:

- Formally submits their application and evidence of prior learning to the Programme Leader/RPL Co-ordinator, who will engage an assessor to make judgement of the evidence against the course requirements.

Prior arrangements will be made to ensure that all parties are notified of the date, time and venue of any assessment in person that is required (professional conversation, presentations, challenge tests, practical demonstrations, etc). Additional cost implications to the applicant which result from in person assessment processes must first be discussed with the applicant by the Programme Leader/RPL Co-ordinator.

## **Phase 2: Assessment - UCOL's Responsibility**

### 5. Evaluation

- Once the full RPL application is received, including ALL relevant evidence, the evaluation should be completed within *the timeframe agreed to by the assessor and student/applicant*.
- The assessor evaluates the evidence presented by the student/applicant and matches this against the course requirements of the course or courses for which credit is sought;
- If required, there will be a meeting between the student/applicant and the assessor, e.g. practical demonstration, interview assessment.

The evaluation process should be open and lead to mutually agreed outcomes.

### 6. Recommendation

The Programme Leader or designated RPL Co-ordinator makes a formal recommendation to the Faculty Board of Educational Improvement or its delegated nominee. Recommendations must be supported by a summary report on evidence provided.

Possible recommendations are:

- Grant full credit;
- Deny recognition of the prior learning for the award of credit;

- Resubmission of the application with further information being supplied;
- Further assessment required.

#### 7. Decision

- The Faculty Board of Educational Improvement, or their delegated nominee, receives the assessor's recommendation and makes a formal decision;
- Should the decision be to seek more evidence from the student/applicant or from the assessor then earlier steps 3-7 may be repeated.

#### 8. Notification

- The student/applicant is formally notified in writing of the outcome;
- Copies of the decision are sent to the Programme Leader/RPL Co-ordinator, assessor(s) and Student Information for entry on the formal student record;
- Where applicable, the applicant is informed of the appeal process and the appropriateness of appealing;
- Where course fees have been paid the student will be refunded for all courses that have been awarded through the Recognition of Prior Learning process;
- The Recognition of Prior Learning Application form will be put on the students file.

### **Phase 3: Appeal**

#### 9. Decide if an appeal is to be made

An appeal based on the provision of new information by the student/applicant is not necessary. This case will be dealt with by a resubmission to the assessor.

When an appeal occurs, the Executive Dean must receive written notification from the student/applicant within 10 working days of the *initial APL* outcome being received by the student/applicant.

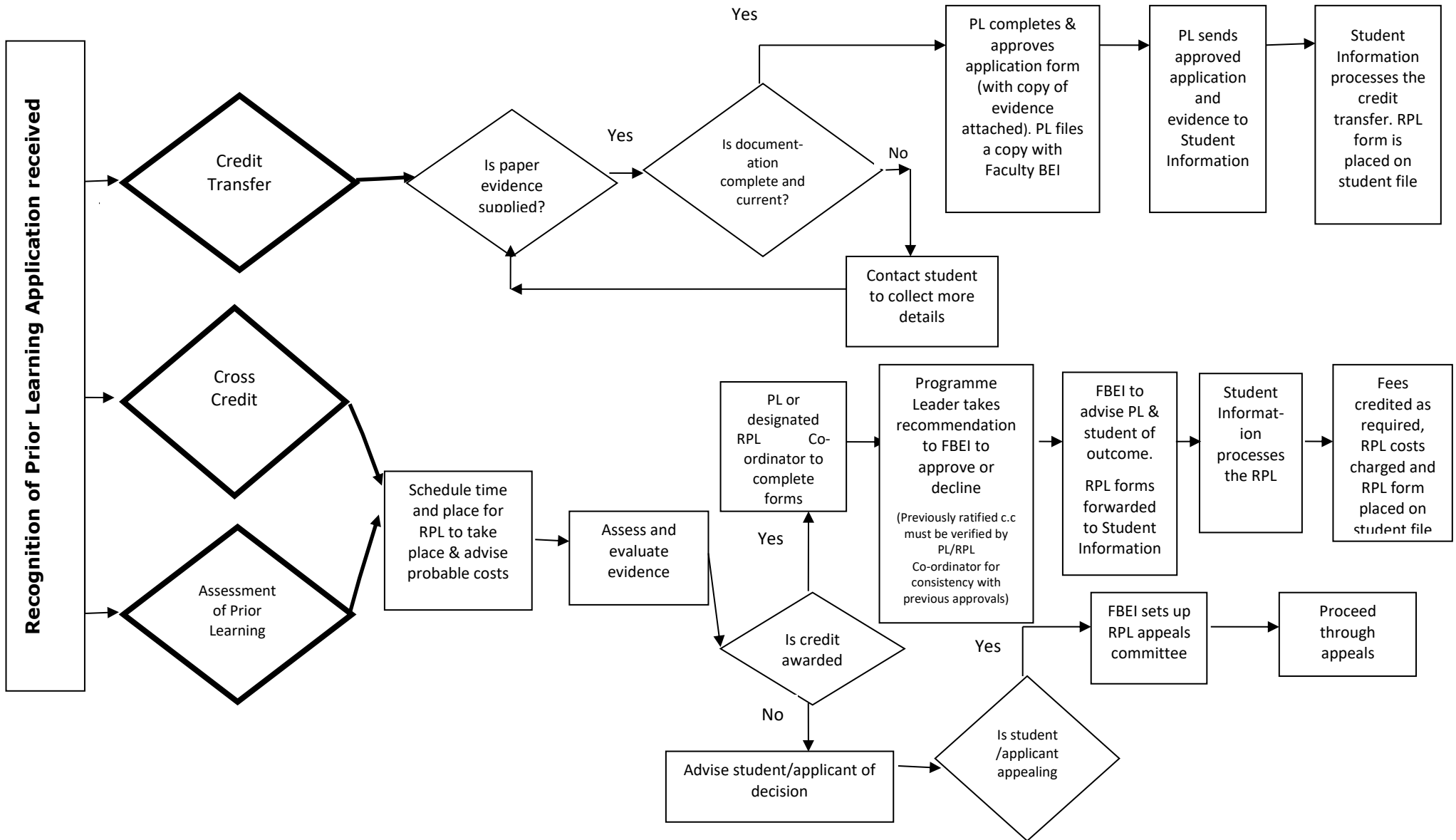
Part IX: Appeals of the Academic Statute applies.

### **Related Documentation**

- [Admission and Enrolment Policy](#)

### **Appendices**

- RPL flowchart
- Definitions





## Definitions

- **Appeal**  
Process to review a disputed decision.
- **Applicant**  
A person not enrolled in a UCOL programme but has submitted a Recognition of Prior Learning application.
- **Assessment**  
The process conducted by Lecturers and/or Approved Assessors and used in determining the granting of credit.
- **Assessment Interview**  
A mechanism for assessing an application for RPL involving a meeting between the assessor and applicant and which may include attestation.
- **Assessment of Prior Learning**  
The process of recognition when a student/applicant believes s/he has met the course requirements, or is seeking recognition of current competence, but does not have a formal academic record or transcript to support the award of credit.
- **Assessor or Assessing Group**  
The person or persons who evaluate the applicant's submission (evidence of learning) and who make a recommendation to the Faculty Board of Educational Improvement on the amount and level of credit that should be awarded. This person/group must have the necessary skills and experience as well as cultural, gender, age and ability sensitivities. The assessor will normally be the person responsible for the courses in that academic year.
- **Attestation**  
The process, by which an applicant applies to have their earlier life and work experiences formally confirmed and matched against the course requirements of a courses. Where a direct match is established, credit for this course will be awarded.
- **Challenge Assessment**  
A means of recognising an applicant's prior learning by allowing them to demonstrate their knowledge, skills or attitudes. It commonly involves taking written, practical or oral assessment task(s).
- **Course**  
The smallest component of a qualification that contributes credit toward the completion of the qualification. Other terms used to describe a course include 'unit' or 'module'.
- **Credit**  
The basic measure used to record the successful completion of a course by a student. For UCOL courses, one (1) credit equates to a minimum of ten (10) hours of student learning. 120 credits will normally be considered as a full-time/full-year workload.

- **Credit Transfer**  
The process of recognition when a student has successfully completed courses at UCOL or at another accredited education provider with identical programme content.
- **Cross Credit**  
The process of recognition when a student/applicant can produce evidence of having been awarded credit for what may be regarded as equivalent courses toward a qualification from an accredited education provider.
- **Examination**  
This may contain theoretical and/or practical components and may be written, oral or demonstrated.
- **Learning Outcome(s)**  
The competencies, skills and knowledge that will be gained through course of study.
- **Portfolio**  
A collection of information assembled in an approved format providing evidence of knowledge, skills and/or attitudes for an award of credit.
- **Programme Leader/ RPL Co-ordinator**  
Designated person within a team or school who has responsibility for co-ordinating RPL applications. This person also advises the applicant on the processes involved in the recognition of prior learning.
- **Recognition of Current Competence**  
Where the individual is (a) able to present evidence that their experience is current and supports the requirements of a course in the qualification, and (b) evidence of their competence at the level achieved by graduates of the qualification: for example portfolio, interview, evidence of work related experiences.
- **Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)**  
The process through which an individual seeks the award of academic credit based on the relevant learning they have acquired through life experience, work experience and formal or informal education or training. RPL may consist of Credit Transfer and/or Cross Credit and/or Assessment of Prior Learning.
- **Student**  
A student formally enrolled in any course(s) at UCOL.
- **Submission**  
Application for recognition of prior learning together with appropriate evidence.