

POLICY TITLE: RPL and Credit Transfer

Purpose

Photography Studies College (Melbourne) does not expect students to repeat learning that has been successfully completed at a similar level and standard elsewhere, where that work is substantially the same in content and standard as that required for the student's course at Photography Studies College (Melbourne). Two types of prior learning may be recognised to enable students to gain credit towards their course at Photography Studies College (Melbourne). These are:

- Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)
- Credit Transfer, which may include the recognition of successfully completed imported units of competency

The purpose of this Policy is to ensure that all staff understand the necessity to provide information about RPL and/or credit transfer to all eligible students and facilitate and support the processes through which students may apply for and be granted exemptions from and/or credit for particular subjects/units in a Photography Studies College (Melbourne) course.

Note: RPL credits can only be granted for entry and/or complete subjects/units of competency and not parts thereof.

Policy

Photography Studies College (Melbourne) will ensure that all prospective students with relevant prior experience or academic studies are advised of the possibility of having this prior experience and/or studies taken into consideration.

Photography Studies College (Melbourne) will ensure that an individual's prior learning is assessed and recognised, irrespective of how or where it has been acquired. Assessment processes will be valid, reliable, flexible and fair. Evidence collected to support this process will be valid, sufficient and authentic.

Photography Studies College (Melbourne) will ensure that applications for RPL and/or Credit Transfer are received and assessed efficiently and accurately by staff with appropriate expertise.

Procedures

Photography Studies College (Melbourne) will conduct this procedure in compliance with the Tertiary Education Quality Standards Agency Act 2012, National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011, Higher Education Support Act 2003 and the Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000, and in line with the AQF Qualifications Pathways Policy, 2013 and associated Qualification Standards.

RPL and/or credit transfer can be applied for by supplying evidence of:

- Previous recognised education & training undertaken.
- Previous non-formally recognised education & training undertaken
- Relevant work and life experiences.

Information about RPL and/or credit transfer will be available to all prospective applicants and will include procedures for applying and assessing all applications. During an interview, the Coordinator Communications & Students and/or Communications and Future Students Officer will explain the concepts of RPL and/or credit transfer and the required evidence to support such claims. Applications for RPL and/or credit transfer should be submitted as soon as the required documentation is complete, but no later than the enrolment closing date for new enrolments for the semester in which the award of RPL and/or credit transfer may affect the student's program of study.

The process for handling applications will differ depending on whether the application is for RPL or credit transfer and is detailed in the relevant procedure documents.

1. RPL - Application Process

RPL involves a formal assessment to determine the extent to which a student's previous learning/experience is equivalent to the entry requirements or learning outcomes of the components of one of the qualifications offered at Photography Studies College (Melbourne). The RPL processes take into account a student's likelihood of successfully achieving qualification outcomes and ensure the integrity of qualification outcomes is maintained (*AQF Qualifications Pathways Policy* section 2.1.6).

Applicants arrange an interview time and collect an RPL Application Form, (subject/unit descriptions containing learning outcomes and performance criteria and/or competency standards will be made available to applicants upon request.)

Applicants complete the RPL Application Form attaching full documentary evidence in support of the application, including transcripts of academic records, course syllabus, work references and names of work referees. It is the applicant's responsibility to obtain all relevant information and validated evidence to support the application.

Applicants return the completed form to the Coordinator Communications & Students or Communications & Future Students Officer with the appropriate fee. Some courses at Photography Studies College incur a fee for an RPL application, this is advised on the RPL Application Form and is non-refundable and payable upon lodgement. Fees will not apply to the Masters Program.

Upon receipt of the application, the Coordinator Communications & Students will liaise with an appropriate member of academic staff to assess the application. Applicants may be required to attend an interview with the assessors to enable adequate assessment of their knowledge and skills. Extra information may be required to support the application.

Once the assessment is complete, it is forwarded to the Director Communications & Students for approval and sign off. Applicants receive written notification of the decision. The applicant will be required to sign the written notification to acknowledge

the outcome of the RPL application. If the application is successful, entry to the course or subject/unit exemption/s will be granted. If not successful, the applicant will be advised of the reasons in accordance with the relevant procedures.

Role of Teachers

If a teacher becomes aware that a student has the required underpinning knowledge and/or skills required for the successful completion of a subject/unit of a course, the teacher is required to refer the student for RPL no later than two (2) weeks after the commencement of the subject/unit.

2. Credit Transfer - Application Process

Credit transfer is a process of mapping, comparing and evaluating the extent to which learning outcomes, discipline content and assessment requirements of the individual components of one qualification are equivalent to the learning outcomes, discipline content and assessment requirements of the individual components of another qualification and, making a judgment about the credit to be assigned between matched components of the two qualifications (*AQF Qualifications Pathways policy* section 2.1.5-2.1.7).

Photography Studies College (Melbourne) has no current formal articulation agreements with other institutions for articulation into its courses.

Each application will be assessed on the basis of the duration of the previous study, when the study was completed, subject/unit content and the manner of assessment.

However, if an applicant has successfully completed an Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) level 5, 6, 7, or 8 in the same discipline area (i.e. Photography or Photo Imaging) within the last five years, and/or equivalent units of competency or academic subjects/units and is intending to enrol or is enrolled in any of the Photography Studies College (Melbourne) courses, they may be eligible to receive credit towards that course.

Photography Studies College (Melbourne) is a dual sector provider, as such RPL and/or credit transfer procedures can differ by sector:

VET Courses:

Clause 3.5 of the Standards enabled by the NVR Act requires the College to **provide credit for prior studies by** accepting and providing credit to learners for units of competency (unless licensing or regulatory requirements prevent this) where these are evidenced by:

- AQF certification documentation issued by any other RTO or AQF authorised issuing organisation, or
- authenticated VET transcripts issued by the Registrar.

Learners are not required to repeat any unit or module in which they have already been assessed as competent. Where a learner provides suitable evidence they have successfully completed a unit at any RTO, the College must provide credit for that unit, providing equivalence can be established.

The College is not obliged to issue a qualification or statement of attainment that is achieved wholly through recognition of units completed at another RTO or RTOs.

Higher Education Courses:

Sections 2.1.5-2.1.7 of the *AQF Qualifications Pathways Policy* specifies that:

- Credit will be given on the basis of formal individual negotiations between students and issuing organisations.
- Recognition of prior learning or advanced standing for relevant and current informal or non-formal learning will be available for students and may be used for entry requirements or credit towards an AQF qualification.
- Credit can be given in the form of block, specified or unspecified credit.

The TEQSA Qualification Standards, as part of the Threshold Standards, further include a requirement that higher education qualification awards at Levels 5-10 of the AQF meet the corresponding specifications in the AQF. The amount of credit to be granted would be up to a maximum of 120 credit points for a Bachelor Degree and a maximum of 48 credit points for a Masters Degree.

The maximum amount of credit that can be given may only be granted where the prior study is considered to have a very high degree of overlap with the content of the qualification.

Supporting Documentation for RPL/credit transfer

The supporting documentation and/or evidence for assessment may include:

- complete subject/unit documentation outlining program of study, including content, of completed qualification.
- mapping of learning outcomes from prior formal or non-formal learning to the relevant qualification components.
- a photographic portfolio containing additional supporting materials and evidence.
- interviews/questioning.
- demonstrations/observation of performance in work based and/or simulated environments.
- examinations.
- projects/structured assessment activity.
- some combination of the above.

Students who transfer to Photography Studies College (Melbourne) from another institution or who request RPL and/or credit transfer must also supply up-to-date, official academic records/transcripts. Such evidence should be in the form of original documents, or copies certified as true by the issuing institution, a Justice of the Peace, or other authorised signatories; and a certified detailed description of the course or courses (extended syllabus with a week-by-week list of topics covered in each course, aims and objectives, contact hours, texts and references, and methods of assessment/grading criteria).

Photography Studies College (Melbourne) students may not need to submit additional documentation if the prior formal learning for which they are seeking credit transfer is from a Photography Studies College (Melbourne) program.

Limitations on RPL/Credit Transfer Applications

RPL and/or credit transfer cannot be applied for retrospectively (ie following the student's completion of a subject/unit whilst enrolled in a Photography Studies College (Melbourne) course) and no later than two weeks after a subject/unit of that course has commenced. RPL and/or credit transfer is not to be utilised as a substitute for non-attendance or non-submission of academic work requirements for any subject/unit.

RPL and/or Credit Transfer Assessment Notification & Record Keeping

In all cases, students will be notified of the outcome of their application as soon as practicable, but no later than two weeks after lodgement of a complete application. All assessments for RPL and/or credit transfer and the outcomes of that assessment will be recorded and acknowledged in line with the protocols specified in the *Assessment Policy*.

Extra Requirements for International Students

If an International student is granted RPL they must attend a meeting with the Director Communications & Students who will devise an individual course plan for that student to ensure they comply with the minimum hours of contact time required under CRICOS and their Visa requirements during the semester.

International students applying for Credit Transfer must attend a meeting with the Director Communications & Students who will ensure all Visa requirements are met in relation to the granting of such credit.

Responsibility

The Director Communications & Students is responsible for ensuring the integrity of all RPL/credit transfer processes and in consultation with relevant teaching staff authorises all decisions made on the granting of RPL and/or credit transfer. This policy will be applied consistently and fairly and will be reviewed annually. Students wishing to appeal an RPL/credit transfer decision should do so in writing to the Director Communications & Students who will then convene a Course Progress Committee to formally review the case.

Definitions

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

Refers to a form of assessment used to determine whether a person has achieved through formal or informal learning and experience, the required learning outcomes of a subject/s or unit/s.

Credit Transfer

Refers to consideration granted with respect to previous formal courses and/or programs completed at Photography Studies College (Melbourne) or another higher education institution or at a TAFE, or other registered training organisations.

Related Documentation

Policies

Student Application and Admissions
Fair Treatment and Equal Benefits and Opportunity
Assessment
Student Records Management

Procedures, Forms & Documents

RPL Application Form
RPL Procedure
RPL Assessment Form
RPL Approval & Acknowledgement Letter
Credit Transfer Application Form
Credit Transfer Procedure
Credit Transfer Check list
Credit Transfer Approval & Acknowledgement Letter

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