

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 learning or experience 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 entry into a course of study or gain credit towards their current 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 requirement to provide information about RPL and/or credit transfer to all eligible students/applicants and facilitate and support the processes through which students/applicants may apply for and be granted entry into a course of study or exemptions from and/or credit for particular subjects/units in a Photography Studies College (Melbourne) course.

Policy

Photography Studies College (Melbourne) will ensure that all prospective students/applicants 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/professional experience is assessed and recognised, irrespective of how or where it has been acquired.

Applications will be assessed against the following principles:

- a. **Validity:** the assessors are assured that the applicant has the skills, knowledge, and attributes or competencies to meet the entry requirements for the course of study.
- b. **Sufficiency:** The assessors are assured that sufficient evidence is provided to enable a judgement to be made of the applicant's skills, knowledge, and attributes.
- c. **Authenticity:** The assessors are assured that the evidence presented for assessment is the applicant's own work, qualification and experience.
- d. **Currency:** The assessors are assured that the evidence presented for assessment demonstrates currency.

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:

- prior photographic experience in a broad range of photographic fields
- formal learning – full or partial attainment of a recognised AQF Qualification.
- Informal learning – for example evidence of experience and skills gained through employment and/or voluntary work (in a broad range of photography related fields)
- non-formal learning - for example: evidence of professional development / extensive workshop/seminar and/or conference participation)

Information about RPL and/or credit transfer will be available to all prospective applicants and will include procedures for applying and assessing all applications. At the interview, the VET Course Director or Academic Director and/or their delegate 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/applicant's previous learning/professional 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/applicant's likelihood of successfully achieving qualification outcomes and ensure the integrity of qualification outcomes is maintained (*AQF Qualifications Pathways Policy* section 2.1.6).

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

Students/Applicants complete the RPL Application Form attaching full documentary evidence in support of the application, including transcripts of academic records, course syllabus, subject outlines, statement of professional experience, CV, 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 (see *RPL Procedure* for full details).

Students/Applicants return the completed form to the VET Course Director or Academic Director and/or their delegate 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 (see *RPL Procedure* for full details).

Upon receipt of the application, the VET Course Director or Academic Director and/or their delegate will liaise with an appropriate member of academic staff to assess the application. Students/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 (see *RPL Procedure* for full details).

Once the assessment is complete, it is forwarded to the VET Course Director or Academic Director for final approval and sign off. Students/Applicants receive written notification of the decision. The student/applicant will be required to sign the written notification to acknowledge the outcome of the RPL application. If the RPL application is successful, a formal course entry offer will be made or subject/unit exemption/s will be granted. If not successful, the student/applicant will be advised of the reasons and be required to undertake the subject/unit before being eligible for graduation, or will receive formal notification that their application for entry to the course of study has been unsuccessful.

Note: For current students RPL credits for subjects/units can only be granted for complete units of competency/academic subjects and not parts thereof.

Role of Teachers

If a teacher becomes aware that a currently enrolled 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 currently enrolled 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:

- presentation of folio of work
- submission of a Personal Statement / Project Proposal
- professional experience statement
- resume / CV
- academic and professional reference / support letter

- **formal learning:**
 - original transcript of results and certified copy of testamur;
 - complete subject/unit / course structure documentation outlining program of study, including content, of completed qualification.
 - mapping of learning outcomes from prior formal to the relevant qualification components.
- **Informal learning:**
 - Statement of competency
 - Sample work (in addition to application folio)
 - Detailed employer or client reference
- **non-formal learning:**
 - statement of competency / evidence of participation
- **additional other evidence if requested:**
 - additional employer / client reference
 - publications
 - relevant procedures of work aligned to course learning outcomes

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 VET Course Director or Academic Director 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 and Students who will ensure all Visa requirements are met in relation to the granting of such credit.

Responsibility

The VET Course Director or Academic Director 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 VET Course Director or Academic Director 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

Application for RPL Procedure (Master of Arts Photography)
RPL Application Form for relevant Course of Study
RPL Procedure for relevant Course of Study
RPL Assessment Form
RPL Approval & Acknowledgement Letter
Credit Transfer Application Form
Credit Transfer Procedure
Credit Transfer Check list
Credit Transfer Approval & Acknowledgement Letter

Publishing Details

Policy number: HED_VET_ST010_v5

Status: Final

Approved: 26/09/2017

Review Date: September 2018

Julie Moss - Managing Director

Published: September 2017

