

<b>Responsible Officer</b>	Pro Vice-Chancellor (Students)		
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Director, Student and Academic Services		
<b>Superseded Documents</b>	UNSW Credit and Articulation Arrangements (AB12/6)		
<b>Review</b>	November 2016		
<b>File Number</b>	2013/18134		
<b>Associated Documents</b>	Recognition of Prior Learning Procedure Admissions Policy Admission to Coursework Programs Procedure Admission to Higher Degree Research Programs Procedure Structure of Postgraduate Programs – Policy Structure of Postgraduate Programs – Procedure Structure of Undergraduate Programs – Policy Structure of Undergraduate Programs - Procedure		
<b>Version</b>	<b>Authorisation</b>	<b>Approval Date</b>	<b>Effective Date</b>
1.0	Authorised by the President and Vice-Chancellor	6 November 2013	6 November 2013

## 1. Preamble

The University of New South Wales recognises that learning can be gained from a variety of contexts. This prior learning may be used to meet admission criteria for and/or credit toward programs of study, where this learning is deemed by the University to be aligned with the program's educational objectives and learning outcomes.

### 1.1 Purpose

The *Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Policy* outlines the principles and values that form the basis of UNSW's approach to recognising prior learning for entry into and/or credit toward programs of study.

The RPL Policy has been developed to support Faculties and to ensure a level of coherence and consistency in practices at UNSW regarding:

- the types of learning that can be counted towards admission into and/or credit towards a program; and
- responsibilities relating to RPL.

### 1.2 Background

The RPL policy draws on the Principles and Operational Guidelines for the Recognition of Prior Learning in Further and Higher Education and Training of the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland 2005<sup>1</sup> and the Australian Qualifications Framework Second Edition January 2013<sup>2</sup>. The accompanying UNSW *Recognition of Prior Learning Procedure* provides more specific information on processes to be followed for staff and students.

## 2. Scope

This Policy applies across the University to undergraduate and postgraduate coursework programs. The RPL Policy, the associated RPL Procedure, as well as the *Admissions Policy* and associated Procedures, can be used as the basis for Faculty RPL procedures.

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.nqai.ie/publication\\_jun2005.html](http://www.nqai.ie/publication_jun2005.html)

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.aqf.edu.au/Portals/0/Documents/2013%20docs/AQF%202nd%20Edition%20January%202013.pdf>

The *Admissions Policy* and associated *Admissions to Higher Degree Research Programs Procedure* should be referred to for RPL requirements for Higher Degree Research programs.

### 3. Definitions

See Appendix B.

### 4. Policy Statement

UNSW qualifications are designed to be coherent and cumulative programs of study, in which specific courses combine to develop discipline knowledge and graduate capabilities. Recognition of prior learning and the granting of credit must support this educational objective.

- 4.1 The University recognises that learning can be gained in formal, non-formal and informal contexts.
- 4.2 Prior learning may be recognized to meet admission criteria to a program and / or to grant credit towards a program.
- 4.3 Credit can be granted as advanced standing or an exemption.
  - Advanced standing reduces the amount of learning required to achieve a qualification and may be granted in the form of specified credit or unspecified credit.
  - Exemption does not reduce the amount of learning required to achieve a qualification.
- 4.4 Prior learning will be assessed:
  - for equivalence with UNSW admission requirements, and/or
  - to determine the value of the credit that should be awarded based on the extent to which the recognised prior learning is equivalent to courses in the program to which admission has been granted.
- 4.5 Students must formally apply for credit to be granted on the basis of recognition of prior learning before commencing the course for which credit is requested, except in cases where an articulation arrangement between UNSW and another higher education provider has been approved and formally established.

### 5. Legal & Policy Framework

This policy must be read in conjunction with the *Recognition of Prior Learning Procedure* and with reference to the following:

- Admissions Policy
- Admission to Coursework Programs Procedure
- Structure of Undergraduate Programs – Policy
- Structure of Undergraduate Programs – Procedure
- Structure of Postgraduate Coursework Programs – Policy
- Structure of Postgraduate Coursework Programs – Procedure
- Program Level Learning Outcomes for Honours and Postgraduate Coursework Programs - Guideline
- Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act and the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards)
- Australian Qualifications Framework

## 6. Implementation

This Policy is implemented by procedures detailed in the *Recognition of Prior Learning Procedure*.

### 6.1 Roles & Responsibilities

Faculty Standing Committees are responsible for defining admission requirements for programs and for setting the criteria for determining the amount of credit that may be granted toward the program. Any cases requiring an individual academic judgment will be assessed by an academic staff member in the faculty.

The Admissions Office (at time of admission) and Student Administration (following admission) are responsible for recording and applying RPL decisions by Program Authorities. Faculties may also delegate responsibility for RPL decision-making to the Admissions Office where this can be based on clear criteria and precedents. Under such an arrangement, cases requiring individual academic judgment will be referred to the Program Authority.

### 6.2 Support & Advice

The Learning and Teaching Unit is responsible for providing guidelines, on the Teaching Gateway website, for good practice in assessing RPL against UNSW and program criteria.<sup>3</sup>

### 6.3 Communication

Faculties are responsible for providing transparent and publicly available information on procedures relating to RPL in their specific disciplinary and organisational contexts. This information should be easily locatable and normally should be published on Faculty websites and the University Handbook. Faculties are responsible for ensuring information about RPL in University systems is accurate.

## 7. Review

This policy will be reviewed three years after approval.

## Appendix A: History

Version	Authorised by	Approval Date	Effective Date	Sections modified
1.0	President and Vice-Chancellor	6 November 2013	6 November 2013	This is a new policy

<sup>3</sup> <http://teaching.unsw.edu.au/>

## Appendix B – Definitions

**Recognition of prior learning (RPL)** - a process that involves assessment of the individual's relevant prior learning (including formal, informal and non-formal learning) to determine:

1. the outcomes of an individual's application for entry to a program, and
2. the nature and magnitude of any credit granted towards satisfying requirements for a program. The following definitions may be used in relation to RPL:

### Types of learning:

**Formal learning** – learning that takes place through a structured program of study that is delivered by education or training providers, and which leads to the full or partial achievement of an officially accredited qualification.

**Non-formal learning** - learning that takes place through a structured program of learning but does not lead to an officially accredited qualification.

**Informal learning** - learning that takes place through life and work experience. Unlike formal or non-formal learning, it is not organised or externally structured in terms of objectives, time or learning support.

**Credit** - the value, in terms of a number of courses, assigned for the recognition of equivalence in content, volume of learning, and learning outcomes between different types of learning and/ or qualifications which reduces the amount of learning required to achieve a qualification. The following definitions may be used in relation to credit:

### Types of credit:

**Advanced standing** - Credit aimed at optimizing student progression through award programs by recognising prior learning as the basis for satisfying requirements for some courses in that program. Advanced standing may be based on formal, non-formal and/or informal learning and may be granted in the form of specified or unspecified credit. Types of credit granted under advanced standing are:

**Specified credit** - Credit granted when a UNSW Program Authority accepts that an exact or near exact equivalence to one or more courses studied at UNSW or another tertiary provider can be demonstrated. Once agreed, this recognition becomes a precedent for other students.

**Unspecified credit** - Credit granted when an exact or near exact course equivalence cannot be demonstrated. Unspecified credit is most often granted when the prior learning is deemed to be equivalent in amount and in academic value to one or more of the courses comprising the elective requirement of a program.

**Exemption** – Where students are exempted from a specified course, but they are not granted a reduction in the amount of learning required to achieve a qualification.

**Substitution** – Substitution is a type of exemption whereby students are exempted from a specified compulsory course, yet are still required to complete, or substitute, an equivalent course to the same unit of credit value.