

Controlled Document – refer to Intranet for latest version

Category: Academic	Date Created: 2002
Responsibility: Director Academic Development	Date Last Reviewed: March 2016
Approval: Executive Director Quality	Version: 16.1

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, Cross Credit and Assessment of Prior Learning.

Scope

This is a UCOL wide procedure.

Procedure

1. Advise students/applicants of the availability of RPL prior to or at enrolment, including the fact that if, due to RPL their enrolment falls below 80% of full-time, 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 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 courses.
5. Every endeavour will be made to meet the following timeframes:
 - Once the full RPL application is received by the faculty, including ALL relevant documentation, the evaluation should be completed within 2 weeks;
 - For students already enrolled RPL applications must be submitted within two weeks of the start of the programme. Late applications will not necessarily be considered;
 - 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 aim has 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 aim 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 learning outcomes 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 courses at UCOL or at another New Zealand accredited education provider with identical programme content and course aims.

1. The student will complete an RPL 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 a 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 can produce evidence of having been awarded credit for what may be regarded as equivalent courses toward another qualification from another 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 academic staff member evaluating the Cross Credit application to ascertain the similarity of course aims, and the level and the currency of the content of the course applied for, 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 module. **Partial credit will not be awarded.***

1. The student will complete an Application Form for RPL. A copy of the student's Academic Record/Transcript must be attached to the Application Form. A \$45 administration fee (including GST) 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 no further charges will be incurred.

However, where staff are required to undertake a comparative evaluation of the UCOL programme and the course for which cross credit is sought, additional charges of \$50/hr (including GST) for staff time may be made.

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 that this may cause delays.
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. If this is the case, any administration fee charged will be refunded. 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 students file. It is the responsibility of the Programme Leader or designated RPL Co-ordinator to advise 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.
4. When an evaluation of a cross credit application is undertaken the student is required to provide information from the programme documentation that will allow the evaluator to ascertain the course aims achieved, the level of the course and its content. After a comparative evaluation 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** firstly 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 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 charged dependant on the length of time it has taken to undertake the work required to determine the cross credit at \$50 per hour (including GST). It is the responsibility of the Programme leader or designated RPL Co-ordinator to advise 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 to be used when a student/applicant believes they can meet the course aims of a course, or if they are seeking recognition of current competence, but does not have a formal academic record or transcript to support the award of credit. In these cases students will be required to present evidence that they can meet the course aims; for example portfolio, challenge assessment, attestation and/or interview. Applicants seeking recognition of current competence will be required to (a) present evidence that their experience is current and supports the aims of any courses 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.

Phase 1: Applicant's Responsibility with UCOL Support

1. Initial Steps

The potential 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 he/she wishes to proceed). This includes payment of fees;
- Will usually enrol and pay course/programme fees prior to the application being lodged. If a student is not enrolled and has not paid their fees, an administration fee of \$45 (including GST) will be charged and an hourly rate (\$50 per hour, including GST) invoiced for the costs of the assessment once the process has been completed;
- Should apply within two weeks of start of course. Late applications will not necessarily be considered.

2. Identifying Scope of APL Application

The applicant:

- Takes stock of their current knowledge and skills; work, leisure, education and training, parenting, community work, etc should be considered;
- Decides the courses for which they wish to seek credit for prior learning or recognition of current competence;
- Looks at the course aims of the courses or qualification;
- Matches their prior learning (life, work, experiences, etc) against the specific course aims of the courses;
- Checks on the availability of credit transfer/cross credit arrangements;

- Checks they meet the requirements of recognition of current competence for a qualification at the graduate level.

NB: In situations where additional specialist academic advice is needed a Specialist Advisor may be appointed. The original Programme Leader / RPL Co-ordinator will arrange this.

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 prior learning.

4. Submission

The student/applicant:

- Formally submits their evidence of prior learning to the Programme Leader/RPL Co-ordinator, relating this directly to the course aims of the courses for which credit is sought;
- Makes a submission. This may be documentary, spoken, an examination, a demonstration, etc. It may be attested to by others, it may, by agreement, take place in a classroom, workplace, community organisation, etc.

Prior arrangements obviously need to be made to ensure that all parties are notified of the date, time and venue. Cost implications to the candidate which result from the choice of an RPL process should be discussed with the applicant by the Programme Leader/RPL Co-ordinator.

Phase 2: Assessment - UCOL's Responsibility

5. Evaluation

- Evaluation of the application will usually be completed within two weeks of receipt of application;
- The assessor evaluates the evidence presented by the applicant and matches this against the course aims of the courses;
- If required, there will be a meeting between the 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;
- Resubmission of the application with further information being supplied;
- Further assessment required by the assessor.

7. Decision

The Faculty Board of Educational Improvement, or their delegated nominee, receives the assessor's recommendation and makes a formal decision at the next meeting.

8. Notification

- The applicant is formally notified in writing of the outcome;
- Copies of the decision shall also be sent to the advisor, assessor(s) and Student Information for entry on the formal student record;
- Should the decision be to seek more evidence from the applicant or from the assessor then earlier steps 3-7 may be repeated;
- The applicant is also informed of the appeal process and the appropriateness of appealing;
- Students will be refunded for all courses that have been credited;
- The 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 applicant is not necessary. This case will be dealt with by a resubmission to the assessor. When an appeal occurs, the Faculty Executive Dean must receive written notification from the student/applicant within 10 working days.

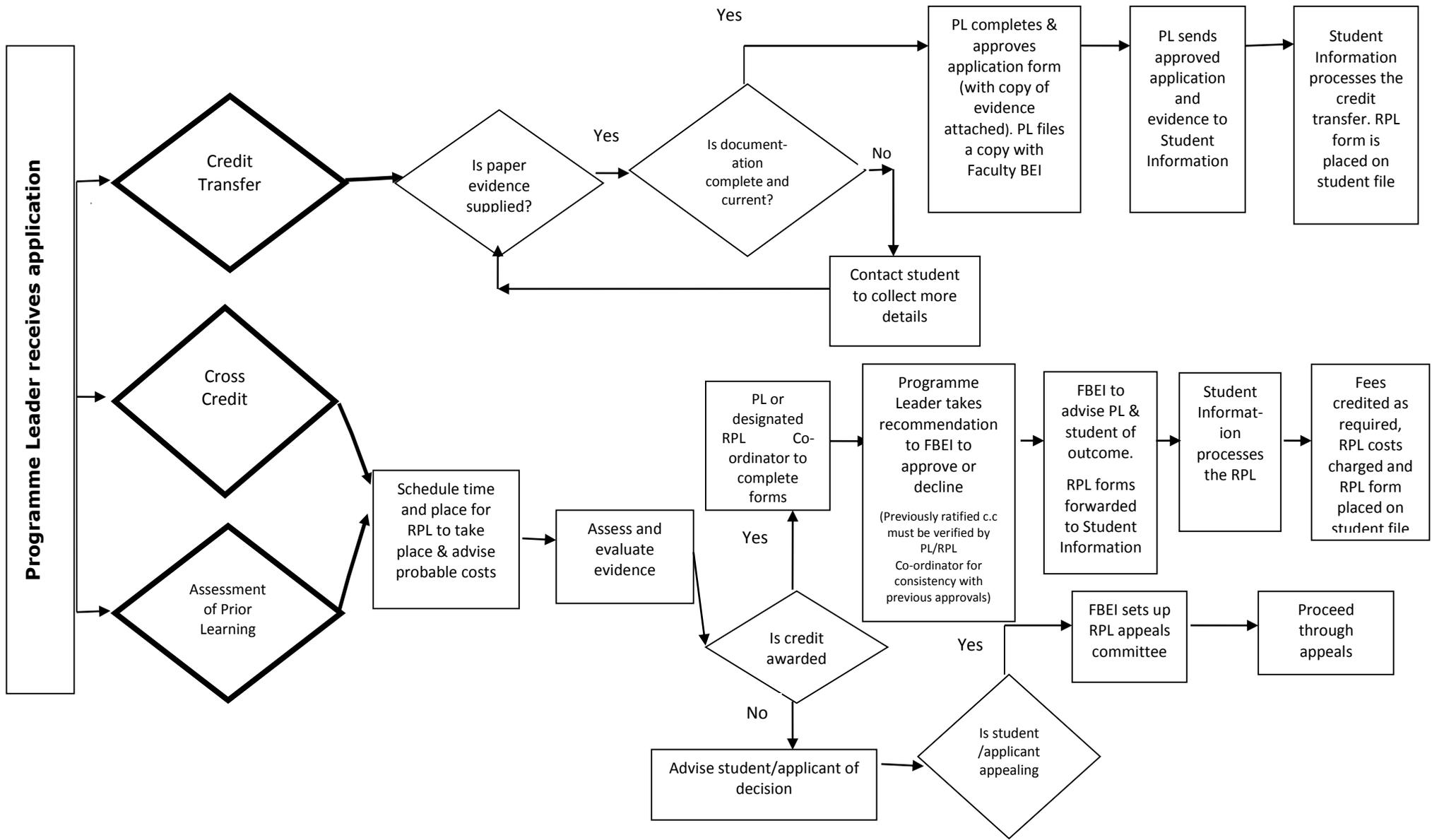
Section 9 (Appeals) of the Academic Statute applies.

Related Documentation

- [Admission and Enrolment Policy](#)

Appendices

- RPL flowchart
- Definitions



Appendix 2

Definitions

- **Appeal**

Process to review a disputed decision.

- **Assessment**

Those processes 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.

- **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 aims 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 a written or oral assessment task(s).

Course

Means 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'.

Course Aim(s)

Means the overarching aim(s) of a course.

- **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**

Means a student has completed the same course as part of another programme at UCOL or at another accredited education provider or awarding authority.

- **Examinations**
These may contain theoretical and/or practical components and may be written or oral or demonstrated.
- **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/Subject or 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 aims of any courses 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
- **Specialist Advisor**
Where the Programme Leader/Subject or RPL Co-ordinator believes he or she does not have sufficient academic knowledge in the applicant's field of experience and study, then they may enlist the support of an Expert Advisor with the appropriate academic background. The Expert Advisor may be in addition to, or replace, the original Programme Leader/Subject or RPL Co-ordinator.
- **Student**
A student formally enrolled in any course(s) at UCOL.
- **Submission**
Application for recognition of prior learning together with appropriate evidence.