

Recognition of Prior Learning Policy

Policy name Recognition of Prior Learning

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Approving body The Academic Board (Senatus)

Responsible officer The Head of School

Implementation officer The Academic Registrar

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Linked policies

Linked forms

The purpose of this policy

Applicants from other recognised institutes or with relevant work or life experience may be admitted into the Cairnmillar Institute (the Institute) courses with exemptions through the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) process.

The Institute, as an approved provider of higher education to international students, processes applications for RPL from all students consistent with its obligations under the National Code Item 31

- 31** *If the registered provider intends to grant student recognition of prior learning (RPL), the provider must have a formal process for conducting and recording this. A record of the student's RPL must be signed by the student and a copy placed on their file.*

RPL for International Students

The Institute as an approved provider of higher education to overseas students has additional obligations in relation to applications for RPL from overseas students consistent with National Code Items 32 and 33:

- 32** *If the registered provider grants an overseas student RPL which leads to a shortening of the student's course, the provider must do one of the following:*
- 32.1** *If the RPL is granted before the visa grant, the registered provider must indicate the actual net course duration (as reduced by RPL) in the eCoE issued for that student for that course.*
- 32.2** *If the RPL is granted before the visa grant, the registered provider must report the change of course duration via PRISMS under s19 of the ESOS Act 2000.
In such cases the provider must remind the student that it is a condition of their visa that they be enrolled in the full-time study. If they finish their course early, the student must either enroll in another CRICOS registered course or depart Australia immediately unless they have been given authorisation by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship to remain in Australia.*
- 33** *If the registered provider grants an overseas student RPL which leads to a reduced study load, i.e., contact hours per week, the provider must not allow the student to study less than a full-time load as defined in paragraph 13.1 and 13.2”.*

RPL for Psychology Students - APAC Requirements

- Students transferring from one AOU to another in Australia in order to undertake a fourth year course in psychology can only be granted recognition for studies in psychology completed if the AOU(s) at which they completed the previous three years is(are) APAC accredited and the completed units were part of an APAC accredited sequence. Credit for any previous studies at the 4th year or higher level and undertaken within Australia, cannot be awarded toward an APAC accredited fourth year unless the units in question were part of an APAC accredited sequence.
- Studies undertaken at non-Australian institutions must be carefully evaluated by the AOU to determine their strict equivalence to the studies for which credit is to be granted, and the AOU must be prepared to defend its decisions regarding the granting of credit must APAC conduct an audit of the AOU"s transfer credit practices.
- Apart from exceptional circumstances, students must not be able to transfer from one Institution or AOU to another during the fourth year of a program and must complete their fourth year at one AOU.

RPL for Counselling and Psychotherapy Students - PACFA Requirements

Provisional Registrants must demonstrate:

(a) Undergraduate degree or equivalent

Three years of psychotherapy or counselling training at undergraduate level or equivalent in terms of level and depth of training, as defined by the Australian Qualification Framework comprising a total of 350 hours.

50 hours of supervision linked to 200 hours of client contact hours must be completed to gain Provisional registration. 10 hours of supervision linked to 40 hours of client contact hours must be completed during training.

(b) Postgraduate degree or equivalent

A relevant undergraduate degree, as defined by the Registrant's Member Association, plus two years minimum Psychotherapy or Counselling training at postgraduate level or equivalent in terms of level and depth of training as defined by the Australian Qualification Framework www.aqf.edu.au comprising a total of 200 hours.

50 hours of supervision linked to 200 hours of client contact hours must be completed to gain Provisional registration. 10 hours of supervision linked to 40 hours of client contact hours must be completed during training.

Clinical Registrants must demonstrate:

Either (i) or (ii) above, plus an additional 750 hours client contact linked to a further 75 hours post training supervision accumulated over a minimum period of two years.

Third Pathway for Eligibility for Listing on the PACFA Register

Recognition of Prior Learning

Where applicant's professional training and development does not fit the above, but is based on extensive training, practice and supervision over several years, they may be listed on the Register through recognition of their prior learning (RPL). The PACFA Professional Training Standards are the guide in determining training equivalence. Higher hours of client contact hours and post training supervision are required for RPL applications.

Procedures for Counselling and Psychotherapy Students

All students wishing to apply for RPL must discuss the possibilities with a relevant course coordinator or Head of School prior to the commencement of the course. RPL applications are not accepted after the enrolment.

International students are advised that exemptions may have an impact if they wish to apply for a Permanent Resident visa upon completion of the course. Students must thoroughly investigate this requirement prior to submitting an application for RPL. The following documents are required to assess the eligibility:

- Certified copy of transcript and certificates
- Unit Description or Syllabus
- Application for RPL form signed by the student.

Process for Granting Credit Transfer

- Student submits application for RPL form.
- Completed application form and supporting documents are provided to the course coordinator at the Institute.
- The course coordinator forwards outcome of RPL assessment to Academic Registrar to up-date credits in the database.
- Credits are recorded on the student record.
- Where a student has not received the letter of offer, student is advised of outcome of credits verbally.
- Where a student has received letter of offer, the student is advised of the outcome of credits in writing.
- Details of credits are recorded in PEPi.
- Notify Academic Registrar to update course completion date including in PEPi where applicable.
- Where applicable an updated CoE is distributed to the student and a copy is retained in the student file.

General

The Institute does not charge for assessment of RPL applications from its current students. Potential or prospective students must be charged a fee of up to \$100 per assessment.

There are external agencies which assist students in applying for RPL. These agencies charge for their services.

The implementation of an "assessment" within the Institute programs is managed by the relevant course cocordinator and approved by the Head of School.

The outcome depends upon many variables including the:

- Nature and amount of evidence provided by the applicant;
- Scope of subject matter covered by the application;
- Specific needs of the applicant (language, special needs, etc);
- Number of equivalent student contact hours involved.
- Type of assessment
- Whether unit/experience was conducted in a similar course

Australian (Domestic) Students

- It is expected that prospective or potential Australian (domestic) higher education students where appropriate, make their applications for recognition of prior learning when they apply for a place in a course.
- Current students are expected to apply for credit or recognition of prior learning prior to the commencement of study.
- Students interested in obtaining RPL must first contact a relevant course cocordinator to discuss the RPL process.

Obtaining Credit / Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

An RPL assessment must normally be obtained prior to the commencement of the program of study. In most circumstances prospective or current higher education students must be advised to develop a portfolio.

Portfolio

The portfolio must contain evidence of the student's prior learning experiences.

(a) In the case of credentialed learning, applications must contain:

- A certified copy of a statement of satisfactory completion of a course offered by a professional body, enterprise, private educational institution, or by any other provider recognised by a university;
- Documentation stating the objectives, learning outcomes and content of the course;
- Details of the contact hours of the course (timetable or other supporting documentation required);
- Details of the presenter.

(b) In the case of uncredentialed learning, applications must include:

- Details of uncredentialed learning, a detailed curriculum vitae and a letter of support from an appropriate person/organisation who can verify these details.
- A document which outlines the link between those learning experiences and the learning outcomes of the course in which the student is seeking credit.
- Students may be required to undertake some form of test or assessment to demonstrate that they have achieved the learning outcomes stated.

Claims for RPL made after initial enrolment in a course, may be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Head of School, or an adhoc subcommittee as appropriate.

Applying for Credit

Students who have prepared a portfolio must lodge an Application for Exemption/RPL form with the Academic Registrar, listing the unit(s) for which recognition of prior learning is sought. Their application must also include their portfolio.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Assessment

All applications for recognition of prior learning must be assessed by the course coordinator. The relevant staff members may consult unit conveners in arriving at conclusions. In considering applications for prior learning, the relevant staff members must determine the extent to which the student's prior learning experiences, and resultant learning outcomes, match the learning outcomes of the course in which they seek credit.

Outcome of Applications for Credit Supported by a Prior Learning Portfolio

On recommendation from the unit Coordinator or relevant course coordinator, the RPL Committee may:

- (a) Grant the level of credit sought by the student;
- (b) Grant credit in excess of the level sought by the student;
- (c) Grant credit at a level lower than that sought by the student;
- (d) Grant such credit as is appropriate in the circumstances;
- (e) Refuse to grant credit; or
- (f) Request additional information be provided either in written form or via an interview.

In recognition of their prior learning, students may be granted Block Credit, Specified Credit, or Unspecified Credit.

Maximum Credit Granted through RPL

The Head of School must determine the maximum credit to be granted for each of the courses under their jurisdiction. Students must normally be required to undertake at least two academic trimesters of study at the Institute before being granted the award.

Notification of Decision

Where a student lodges an application for credit, the course coordinator and Head of School must, within five (5) working days of making a decision to grant or refuse an application for RPL credit, notify the student in writing of what credit (if any) is to be given for his/her prior learning. In cases in which a prior learning portfolio is submitted in support of a RPL application, and that application is not granted, the Head of School must furnish the student with written reasons for its decision.

Appeals Procedure

A student who is dissatisfied with the decision in relation to his/her application for recognition of prior learning, may appeal this decision on one or more of the following grounds:

- (a) That a procedural irregularity has occurred
- (b) That the application was not heard on its academic merits

A student who wishes to appeal against the decision in relation to his/her application for recognition of prior learning must submit an appeal in writing to the Academic Registrar.

Appeals must be lodged with the Academic Registrar no later than five (5) working days from notification of the outcome of the application.

The written appeal must state the grounds on which the appeal is made, and must contain:

- An outline of why the student believes the original decision is inappropriate; and,
- Any additional evidence in support of the student's case (copies of relevant documents must be attached to the written appeal)

The Academic Registrar or nominee must consider the appeal by reviewing the initial decision and the student's written submission. The Academic Registrar or nominee is required to consult with any relevant lecturers and may, if further information is required, discuss the matter directly with the student.

The student must be informed of the outcome of the appeal within ten (10) working days of its lodgment as identified by the date of receipt by the Academic Registrar. There is no further appeal from the decision of the Academic Registrar, or nominee to any other officer or body within The Institute.