

Recognition of Prior Learning Policy

Section 1 - Purpose

(1) This Policy provides the principles for Macquarie University to apply a consistent, equitable and transparent approach to the Recognition of Prior Learning to determine eligibility for admission to the University and / or Credit Transfer. It should be read in conjunction with the [Assessing Recognition of Prior Learning Applications Procedure](#), the [Development of Articulation and Related Credit Arrangements Procedure](#), the [Schedule of Equivalencies: Formal Learning for Undergraduate Programs](#), [Schedule of Exceptions to Currency](#), and the [Schedule of Minimum Requirements at Macquarie](#).

Background

(2) The University acknowledges that learning can take place outside the formal education system, and that recognising Formal, Informal and Non-Formal learning supports an individual's lifelong learning goals.

(3) The overarching principle of this Policy is to preserve the integrity and distinctiveness of Macquarie University awards while facilitating an Applicant's access to admission and Credit Transfer based on learning already undertaken.

(4) Within this principle, the University also aims to:

- a. support mobility between institutions, and progression through levels of qualifications;
- b. support an individual's lifelong learning goals by recognising prior learning and experiences;
- c. ensure consistency and transparency in the offering of admission and granting of Credit Transfer; and
- d. establish a framework for Credit Transfer arrangements in formal articulation agreements between the University and other institutions.

(5) This Policy complies with the requirements of the [Australian Qualifications Framework](#) (AQF) and the [Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency](#) (TEQSA).

Scope

(6) This Policy applies to all coursework Awards offered by Macquarie University. This Policy governs all Articulation Agreements of the University.

Section 2 - Policy

(7) The assessment of Prior Learning for the purposes of admission and / or Credit Transfer will be evidence-based, equitable and academically defensible ([HESF Domain 1: Student Participation and Attainment](#)). The precise nature of the evidence-based assessment may vary from discipline to discipline and assessments will be made on the merit of each individual case. The Recognition of Prior Learning by the University will usually reduce the required Volume of Learning for a course.

(8) The University may, at its discretion, set additional requirements for the Recognition of Prior Learning, including

testing, interviews, and portfolio submission. More information about the criteria for assessment of Prior Learning is available in the [Assessing Recognition of Prior Learning Applications Procedure](#).

Admission

(9) The University assesses all applications for admission according to the [Admission Policy](#).

(10) The University will assess Prior Learning to determine whether an Applicant meets specific eligibility requirements for admission to a course, provided the Prior Learning is current and relevant to the admission requirements of the course.

(11) Eligibility for Credit towards a course does not guarantee admission to that course, as there may be other entry requirements that have not been met or course places may be limited.

(12) Eligibility for Credit does not change English language requirements.

(13) Professional accreditation and registration requirements may impact on whether Credit is available for some courses. Any such restrictions will be approved by Academic Senate and recorded as exemptions under the [Schedule of Minimum Requirements at Macquarie](#) and / or [Schedule of Exceptions to Currency](#).

(14) Admission points to Postgraduate awards will affect the amount of RPL available. If a student is admitted to a one (1) year 80 credit point Masters Degree (Coursework), no additional RPL will be awarded. In all cases, RPL granted must align with the requirements in the [Schedule of Minimum Requirements at Macquarie](#).

Currency

(15) Prior Learning that has been attained within ten years of the year of application for admission will generally be considered current.

(16) Any changes to this timeframe for a course or group of courses will be determined by Academic Senate and recorded in the [Schedule of Exceptions to Currency](#).

Relevancy

(17) Prior Learning will be considered relevant where:

- a. there is evidence to demonstrate that the Applicant has achieved a standard of learning comparable to the admission requirements of the course;
- b. the Applicant can demonstrate competency and readiness for tertiary studies; and
- c. there is a direct relationship to the admission requirements of the course.

Internal Course transfer

(18) If a student transfers from one Macquarie University Course to another, Credit approved for the original course may not automatically transfer to the new course due to professional accreditation / registration or other discipline-specific requirements.

(19) Exceptions to this are:

- a. there is an approved Articulation Agreement in place which covers the transfer between the two courses;
- b. previously granted Credit is for a unit which is common to both courses or considered comparable across both courses.

(20) Students are encouraged to seek advice on this when applying for internal course transfer and may be required

to re-apply for Credit in the new course. Refer to the [Course Transfer \(Undergraduate Coursework\) Policy](#).

Credit Transfer

Types of Credit

(21) Block Credit, where the applicant's Prior Learning is assessed as being at an appropriate level and standard relevant to the University's offerings and meeting the Learning Outcomes for a group of units.

(22) Unspecified Credit, where the applicant's Prior Learning is assessed as being at an appropriate Level and standard relevant to the University's offerings for a unit or a group of units in an option set or in the flexible zone. This Credit may be designated with a particular subject area or PACE classification.

(23) Specified Credit, where the applicant's Prior Learning is assessed as meeting the Learning Outcomes for a specific unit, or units.

Currency

(24) Prior Learning that has been attained within ten years of the date of application for Credit will generally be considered current.

(25) Any changes to this timeframe for a course or a specific unit will be determined by Academic Senate and recorded in the [Schedule of Exceptions to Currency](#).

(26) Unspecified Credit that is granted for formal learning is not subject to a currency requirement.

Relevancy

(27) Prior Learning will be considered relevant for the granting of:

- a. Block Credit where there is evidence that:
 - i. the applicant has achieved a quality and standard of learning equivalent to tertiary studies;
 - ii. the Prior Learning is of an appropriate Level;
 - iii. the applicant can demonstrate the attainment of the Learning Outcomes of a group of units; and
 - iv. the Prior Learning is assessed as equivalent in depth and breadth.
- b. Unspecified Credit at a particular Level where there is evidence to demonstrate that:
 - i. the applicant has achieved a quality and standard of learning equivalent to tertiary studies; and
 - ii. the Prior Learning is assessed as being at an appropriate Level relevant to the University's offerings; and
 - iii. the Prior Learning is assessed as equivalent in depth and breadth.
 - iv. for PACE units, Academic Senate's criteria for PACE units have been met.
- c. Specified Credit where there is evidence to demonstrate that:
 - i. the applicant has achieved a quality and standard of learning equivalent to tertiary studies;
 - ii. the Prior Learning is of an appropriate Level;
 - iii. the applicant can demonstrate the attainment of the Learning Outcomes of a specific unit or units; and
 - iv. the Prior Learning is assessed as equivalent in depth and breadth.

Minimum Requirements at Macquarie University

(28) The maximum external Credit Transfer allowed towards a Macquarie University Award will be determined by the requirement that the student complete a minimum amount of the Award at Macquarie University, where:

- a. the amount is unique to the Award, having not been used towards the completion of another Award; and

- b. the amount is made up of units or components undertaken as part of the student's enrolment at Macquarie University.

(29) The minimum amounts for various Award types are specified in the [Schedule of Minimum Requirements at Macquarie](#) which is a schedule to this Policy.

(30) Amendments to the [Schedule of Minimum Requirements at Macquarie](#) are approved by the Academic Standards and Quality Committee (ASQC).

(31) Limits on maximum Credit as set out above do not apply to approved Macquarie University Nested Awards.

Rescission of Credit

(32) Credit may be rescinded at the request of the student prior to, or after, course commencement.

(33) Rescission of Credit after course commencement must be academically justified and form part of an academic success intervention strategy for the student.

(34) Credit may also be rescinded by the University in the following circumstances:

- a. Credit was granted on false or misleading information provided by the student; or
- b. Where it is required due to a major change in a Course or Major, including withdrawal of a Course requiring course transfer.

Appeal

(35) A student may appeal a decision regarding the assessment of Prior Learning for the purpose of admission and / or Credit Transfer and rescission of Credit.

(36) Grounds for an appeal are limited to procedural error or breach of procedural fairness.

(37) Appeals will be managed through the Academic Appeals Panel, and are to be made in accordance with the [Academic Appeals Policy](#).

Quality Assurance

(38) The University will safeguard the quality of its awards by ensuring that:

- a. the assessment of Prior Learning for admission is evidence-based and questions the applicant's competency and readiness for tertiary study;
- b. the assessment of Prior Learning for Credit Transfer is evidence-based, and ensures that the learning outcomes have been met;
- c. Credit granted on the basis of learning completed within and outside Macquarie University is not recorded with a grade and does not contribute to any Grade Point Average (GPA) / Weighted Average Mark (WAM);
- d. Credit on the basis of prior Formal Learning is only granted for completed units where the final grade is a Pass, or equivalent grade, and higher;
- e. Grades of 'concessional pass', 'terminating pass' or equivalent, from another higher education institution, will not be deemed to be successful completion for the purpose of Credit, unless supported by additional information and approved on a case-by-case basis;
- f. Credit granted by another institution on the basis of Prior Learning is not transferable to Macquarie University unless the original prior learning on which the Credit is based is also assessed by Macquarie University;
- g. standards for the assessment of Prior Learning are regularly reviewed and monitored by the Academic

Standards and Quality Committee (ASQC); and

h. decisions are reviewed and monitored by the Faculty Standards and Quality Committees (FSQC) or equivalent.

Section 3 - Procedures

(39) Refer to the [Assessing Recognition of Prior Learning Applications Procedure](#) and the [Development of Articulation and Related Credit Arrangements Procedure](#).

Section 4 - Guidelines

(40) Nil.

Section 5 - Definitions

(41) Commonly defined terms are located in the University [Glossary](#). The following definitions apply for the purpose of this Policy:

- a. Applicant means a person who is making an application for RPL under this Policy;
- b. Articulation means a process that enables students to progress from a completed Award to another Award with predetermined admission and / or Credit arrangements. Articulation is formalised by an approved institutional agreement;
- c. Award means the qualification resulting from successful completion of a specific Course;
- d. Block Credit means Credit granted towards a group of units defined for this purpose (such as the flexible zone, designated minor, foundation zone);
- e. Credit means the value assigned for the recognition of equivalence in learning outcomes between different types of learning and / or Awards;
- f. Credit Transfer means a process that provides students with consistent Credit outcomes for a unit or units of a Course based on identified equivalence in Learning Outcomes;
- g. Course means a sequence of study which leads to a higher education Award;
- h. Formal Learning means learning that takes place through a structured program of learning that leads to the full or partial achievement of an officially accredited qualification (AQF Glossary of Terminology);
- i. Informal Learning means learning gained through work, social, family, hobby or leisure activities and experiences. Unlike Formal or Non-Formal Learning, Informal Learning is not organised or externally structured in terms of objectives, time or learning support (AQF Glossary of Terminology);
- j. Learning Outcomes means the expression of the set of knowledge, skills and the application of the knowledge and skills a person has acquired and is able to demonstrate as a result of learning (AQF Glossary of Terminology);
- k. Level: the level of an Award reflects the relative complexity and / or depth of its Course Learning Outcomes, and is expressed according to the various AQF levels. The level at which a unit is taught indicates the amount of prior knowledge required to study it successfully.
- l. Nested Award means a set of Macquarie University Awards approved by Academic Senate that forms stages within the highest Award, where each stage may operate as an entry and / or exit point. Nested Awards are designed to allow full Credit Transfer between the Macquarie University awards.
- m. Non-formal Learning means learning that takes place through a structured program of learning but does not lead to an officially accredited qualification (AQF Glossary of Terminology);
- n. Prior Learning means learning that is Formal, Informal and / or Non-Formal and which is evidenced, current and

relevant, and has taken place:

- i. outside Macquarie University; and / or
 - ii. within a completed Macquarie University Award.
- o. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) means a process that involves assessment of an individual's relevant Prior Learning (including Formal, Informal and Non-Formal learning) to determine eligibility for admission to a Course and / or the granting of Credit;
 - p. Rescission of Credit means a process whereby a Recognition of Prior Learning decision to grant Credit is overturned;
 - q. Specified Credit means Credit granted towards a specific unit or units of a Course;
 - r. Unspecified Credit means Credit granted towards a unit or a group of units in an option set or in the flexible zone. This Credit may be designated with a particular subject area or PACE classification.
 - s. Volume of Learning means a measure which identifies the notional duration of all activities required for the achievement of the Learning Outcomes specified for a Course. Volume of Learning is expressed in equivalent full-time years.

Status and Details

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